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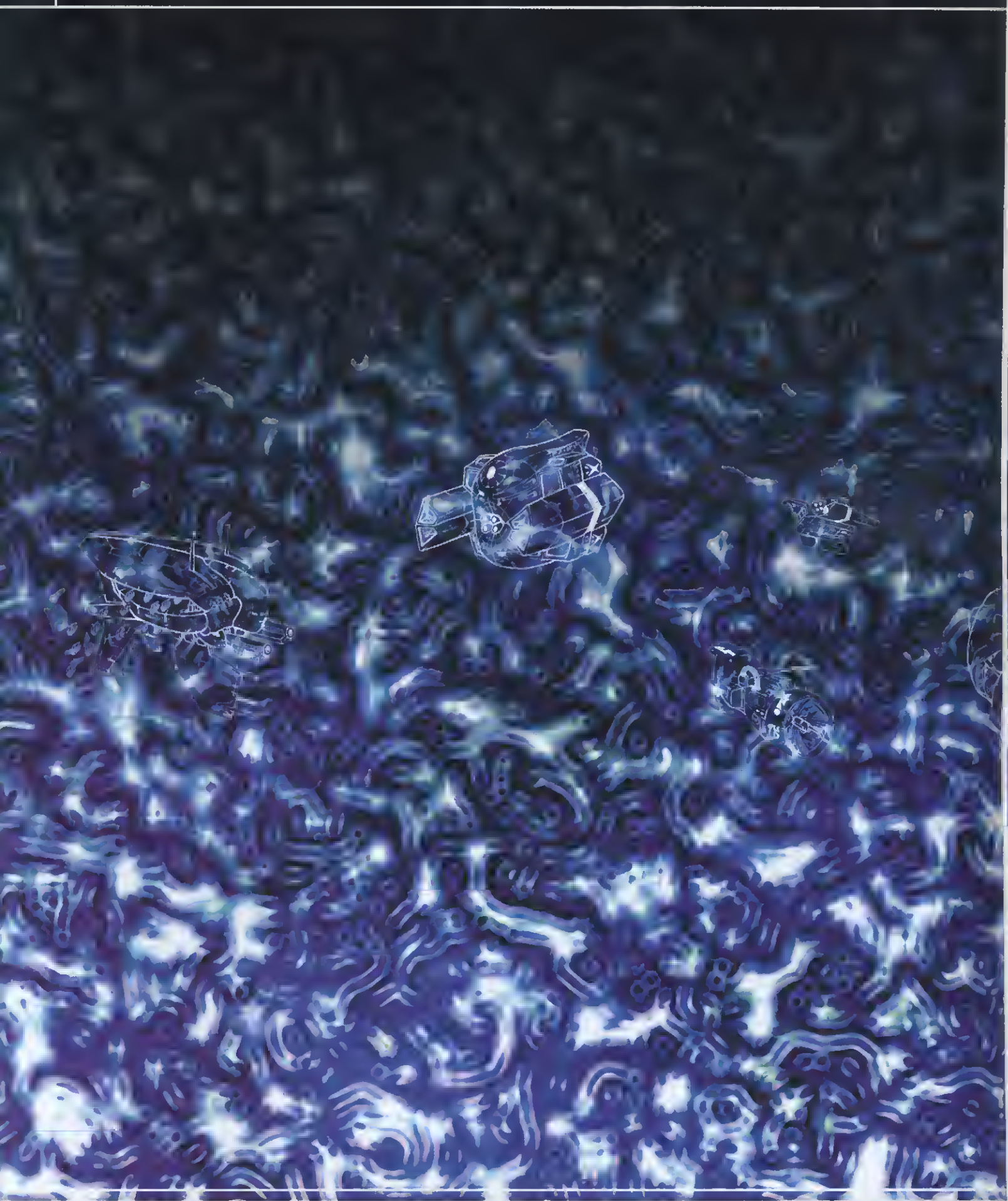
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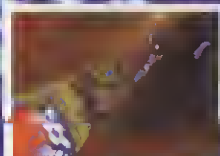
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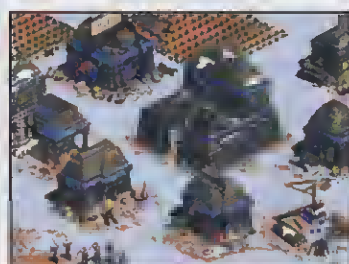
38 AMERICAN MCGEE'S ALICE Twisted *QIII* remix of *Alice In Wonderland*.



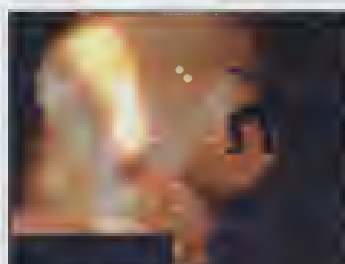
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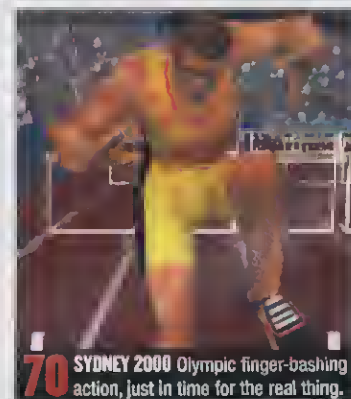
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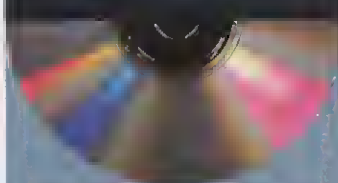
We love it and you will too. Find out how to stay alive and kill the opposition



“One of the most interesting things in *Elite Force* is the introduction of the Hazard Team, a mix of the security guards in *Half-Life* and the officers in *SWAT 3*, with more than a touch of *Starship Troopers*”

58 STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE Cross *Quake III's* superlative engine with the *Star Trek* universe and a few Borg cubes and you've got the latest game from Raven Software. Check out our massive and exclusive six page review.

ON THE CDs



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➡ Another daft looking VR headset. Check out our verdict on page 118.



WIN! **THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS** Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to **The Compo No One Finds (94), PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7JL**. The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The editor's decision is final. Closing date: Thursday September 21 2000. The winner of our August (#92) cover compo was Mr Neil Graham of Aberdeen, who was something from the ZONE prize cupboard for sending in the correct answer to our last little teaser.



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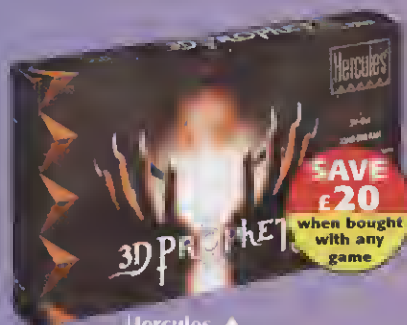
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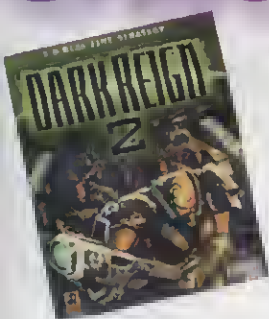
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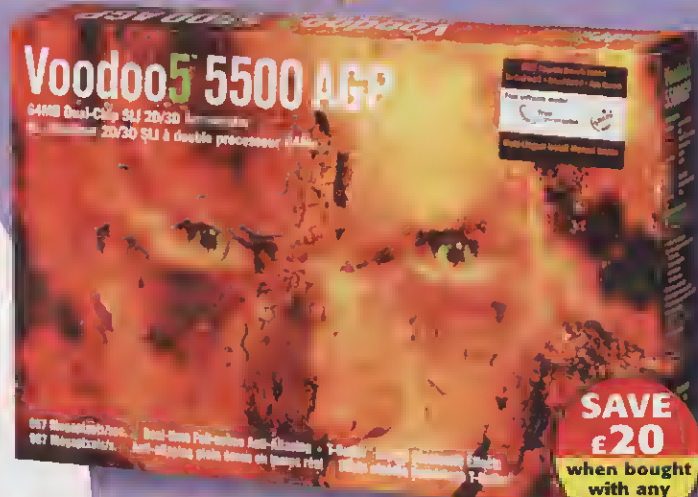
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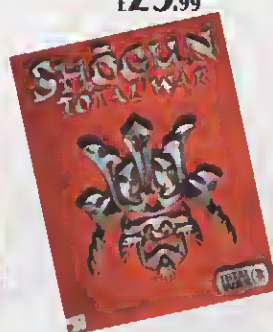
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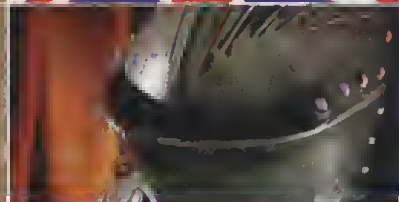
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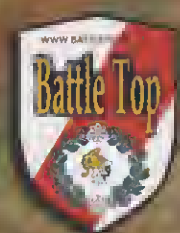
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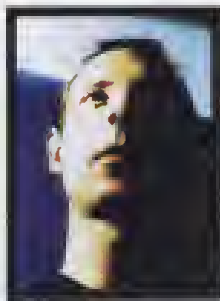
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THE STATE OF THE ART



We at PC ZONE are intrigued as to how some games ever get to see the light of day. Take a quick look at the end of our Reviews section and you will see a few titles that have been literally crucified by their respective reviewers. These games have not only sidled their way surreptitiously past the mediocrity police to get to the PC ZONE office, they have made their way into high street stores, where they await patiently for unsuspecting and gullible gamers to unwittingly shell out money for some of the worst games we have had the misfortune to review in the past year.

You have to wonder how these things ever reach completion. Surely at some point in the development process someone must look at these games and see how utterly awful they are. So how do they ever get released? We're guessing that the publishers responsible for these things just cut their losses and dump them on the store shelves in the hope of regaining some of the development cost. That's where PC ZONE comes in. It is common practice now for publishers not to send their little 'accidents' in for review. This is not a problem. We know where HMV and Virgin are. We have money.

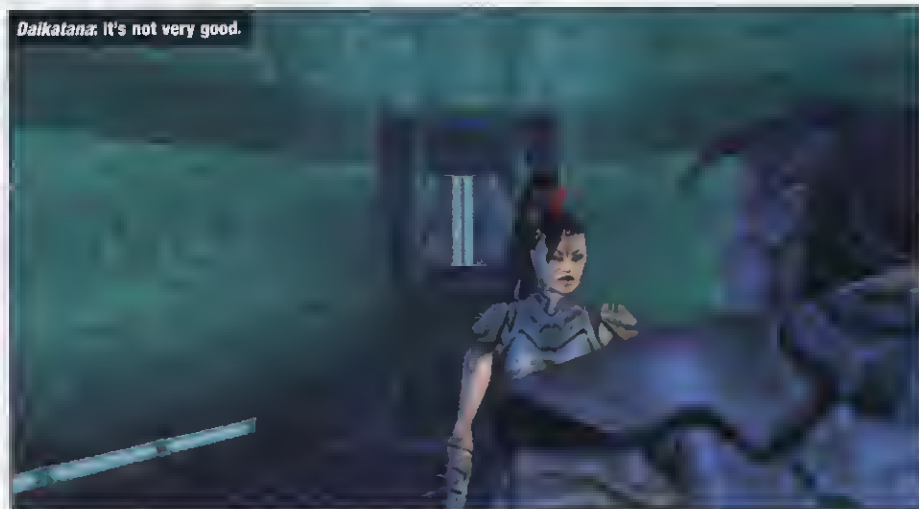
“Surely at some point in the development process someone must look at these games and see how utterly awful they are”

We will buy them. Every one of them. And God help them when they are handed to one of our writers for review.

The moral of this short (but important) missive is this: if you haven't read a review in PC ZONE of a title you're interested in, the chances are high that it is 'not very good'. That's what we're here for, to protect you, the readers, from such horrible monstrosities. We're good like that.

Best of luck, enjoy the issue.

Chris Anderson,
Editor



TOP STORY



Your view from the captain's chair will allow you to keep a close eye on what your bridge crew are getting up to.

MAKE IT SO...

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Totally Games
PUBLISHER Activision
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE TBA
WEBSITE www.bridgecommander.com

IN SUMMARY

Take the 3D captain's chair and lead your crew through more than 30 missions of not only combat, but exploration and diplomacy. Strategic rather than fast-paced, *Bridge Commander* aims to capture the feeling of capital ship combat that up until now only Jean-Luc Picard has tasted.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

If *Bridge Commander* doesn't turn out to be the best *Star Trek* game ever, or at least the best *Star Trek* space combat game ever, (not that that's going to be difficult) then we'll eat our Federation uniforms — not that we have any you understand.

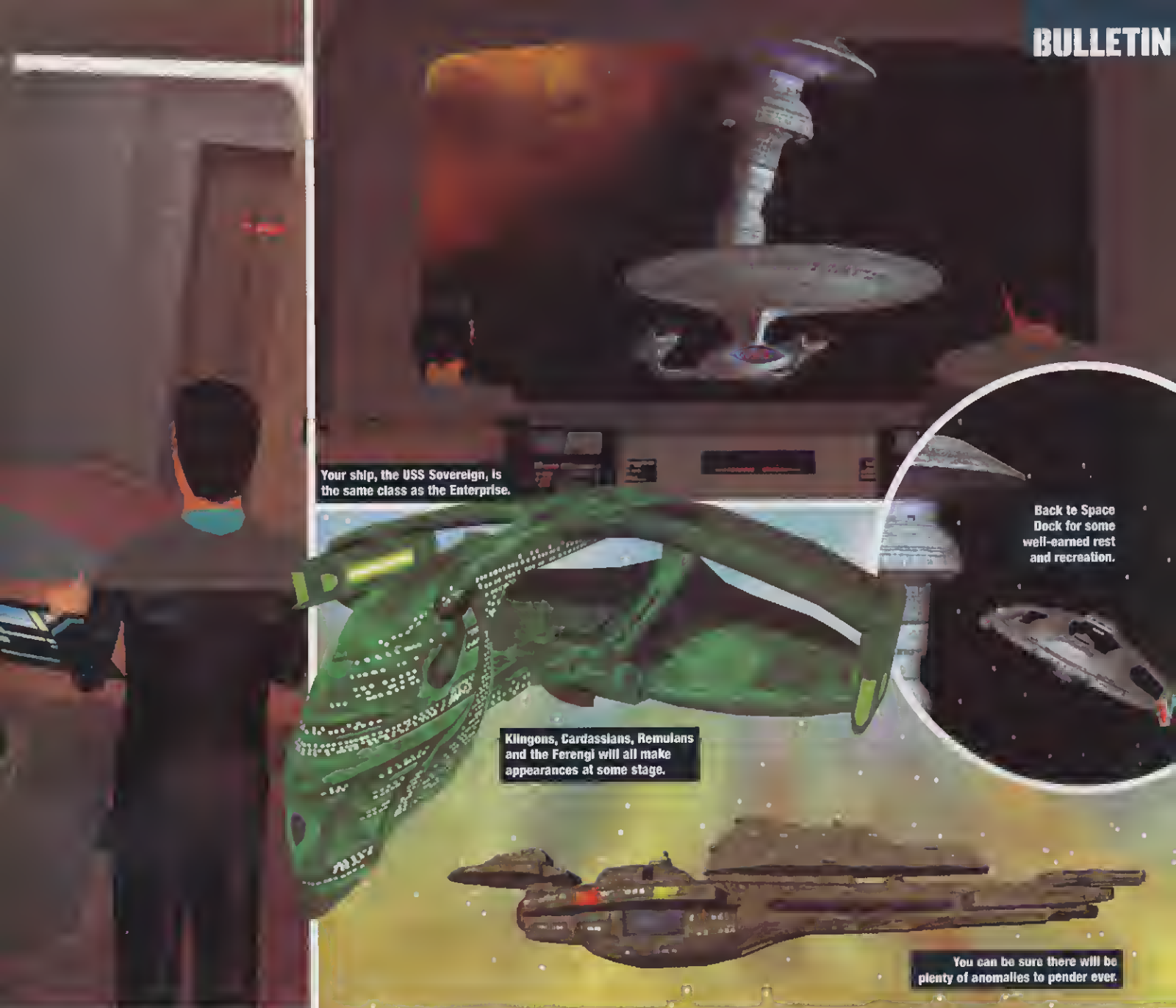
As you complete missions, new ships will become available for you to control.

STAR TREK: BRIDGE COMMANDER



Shock, horror! Totally Games, maker of the *X-Wing* series, has defected to the Federation to bring us what could be the finest *Star Trek* game ever made

★ **ENGAGED:** Richie Shoemaker



Although it will quite clearly never happen, if ever there was to be a *Star Trek vs Star Wars* space combat game, with TIE fighters shooting down Federation shuttlecraft and the Millennium Falcon outrunning the Enterprise in the race to Alderaan, Totally Games would be the developer behind it.

Like a glorious trail of gaming waypoints cutting through the vast emptiness of mediocrity, Totally Games has left in its wake some of the most stunning space and flight combat games ever created. Although the success of the *X-Wing* series may have had as much to do with the universe in which it was based as the games themselves, it wouldn't be too much of an exaggeration to say that it was *X-Wing* and its three sequels that helped kept *Star Wars* alive throughout the 20-year drought of films.

However, for their next space game, Totally Games and Larry

Holland have switched sides. Ditching the fast-paced combat of *Star Wars*, Totally Games has moved over to the ponderous diplomatic angle of *Star Trek*, where the black-and-white boundaries of morality are less defined and the uniforms more starched. The legacy, however, is no less daunting. *Star Trek* games, apart from a couple of ageing point-and-click adventures, are in need of a warp-speed game. *Star Trek* needs an *X-Wing* of its very own, and Totally Games is perhaps the only developer who has any chance of delivering it.

FIRST CONTACT

However, *Bridge Commander* will be about as far removed from *X-Wing* as *Star Trek* is to *Star Wars*. As we have seen in such calamities as *Starfleet Academy* and, to a lesser extent, *Klingon Academy* (reviewed last issue), doing the *Star Wars* thing in the *Star Trek* universe is just plain wrong. Playing to the strengths of the *Next Generation* series, *Bridge*

Commander will centre as much on exploration and diplomacy as it will combat. As Federation doctrine dictates, if combat can be avoided, it should be. There are consequences to your actions and if, for instance, a

“*Star Trek* needs an *X-Wing* of its very own, and Totally Games is perhaps the only developer who can deliver it”

civilian freighter comes under attack, you may find you'll have to ask questions first and shoot later, perhaps teleporting the beleaguered crew under cover of diplomacy.

From a 3D view on the bridge of the USS Sovereign, your success as captain will rely as much on your actions as it will the crew. Around you each crew member will work together, manning security, engineering, medical, science, navigation and helm, and you can personally take over each of these sections. As systems fail and consoles blow, engineering teams will hastily

make repairs around you and in the heat of battle you can watch from a view outside the ship.

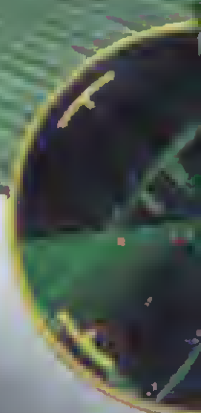
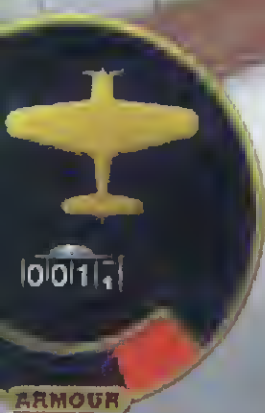
The story, which will bring in the vocal talents of Captain Picard and Commander Data, revolves around

a typical galaxy-threatening scenario, this time close to Cardassian space. Colonists need rescuing, borders are threatened and during the course of 30 or so missions, we're told a new alien race will make itself known.

Although pretty much sticking to the script in terms of design, what is so promising about *Bridge Commander* is that Totally Games is prepared to make space combat, as a genre, fit into the *Star Trek* universe rather than the other way around. If it works, we could be looking at a first for *Star Trek* gamers – a good space combat game. It's about time. [E]

TOP STORY

It'll be like shooting ducks in a bath.



CARPET BOMBING THE HOME FRONT IN...

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER UDS/Paradox
PUBLISHER Eon Digital Entertainment
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE October
WEBSITE <http://dogfighter.uds.se>

IN SUMMARY

Fly 15 aircraft through 11 rooms against miniature tanks, ships, guns and other aircraft. Dodge swinging doors, fly under beds and through open windows and generally destroy anything that moves (and everything that doesn't) as you wage war on the home front.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

If your idea of fun as a young boy was to build scale models of aircraft and throw them, doused in petrol, from your bedroom window, *Airfix Dogfighter* is the game for you. But this time around it won't get you a tanned behind for your troubles.

AIRFIX DOGFIGHTER

If you want realism we strongly advise you look elsewhere. Home is where all the real fun is...

✶ PLANE CRAZY: Richie Shoemaker



There was a time when models enhanced by plastic surgery were little more than hastily constructed World War II aircraft, fashioned from mass-produced plastic kits, smudged together with glue and drowned in paint. Some of you may have had them dangling from the ceiling, others would have taken far greater pleasure from stuffing them with fireworks and throwing them from open windows. Either way, very few of us can claim to have any such aircraft still in service nowadays. Most such models would have long since perished.

Today, with PCs and PlayStations simulating the wargames once played in bedrooms and backyards, model-making as a hobby has gone the way of the dodo – those still practising the art are now labelled as trainspotters. However, those hankering back to such days can rejoice – *Airfix Dogfighter* is on the way.

Taking its influence from the lamentable *Army Men* series, *Airfix Dogfighter* allows you to take to the skies, restricted as they are by walls and ceilings, through the comfort of your own virtual home. Fifteen authentically remodelled aircraft from World War II will be at your disposal and the aim is to bomb, strafe and dogfight your way through all the rooms of a typical suburban house.

“Airfix Dogfighter gives us the opportunity to swoop underneath tables and chairs and bomb carpets – and everything else, including the kitchen sink”

Developed by UDS, the Swedish team behind the long-forgotten gem of a racer *Ignition*, *Airfix Dogfighter* makes no pretence at being a realistic flight simulation, rather the game is a simple arcade fix, offering fast-paced airborne toy combat set in miniature.

Labelling the game as *Army Men* in planes is perhaps a little harsh. Where

Army Men and its unending sequels failed to inject an ounce of originality, the backdrops seemingly offering only a cosmetic switch in gameplay, at least *Airfix Dogfighter* gives us the opportunity to swoop underneath tables and chairs and bomb carpets – and everything else, including the kitchen sink. If you wish you can also ‘paint’ your planes, choosing from a ready-mixed palette of colours, and you can even adorn your fuselage

with sticky fingerprints cast in glue. For the multiplayers among you, tail and fuselage art can be incorporated and you can even design your own homes to fly about in, placing breakable objects like vases in strategic places – something we were never allowed to do in our childhoods. In multiplayer games

too, as in the single player, light switches and doors can be shot to trap your pursuer in darkness or send them crashing into said doors.

The planes range from fighters such as the Japanese Zero and British Spitfire to jets like the Me262. Gun emplacements will be open for attack, and in the bathroom, battleships and submarines will be fighting for control of the plughole.

As well as traditional weapons like machine guns, bombs and rockets, household objects can be picked up – fireworks, for example – and used as paramines and A-bombs. If we could have wreaked this much havoc in our pre-teen years, our fathers would surely have brought the slipper to our behinds, but the fact that we’ll be able to burn carpets and smash bookshelves without reprisal, through every room in the house as well as the garden (yes, you can at last rid the world of garden gnomes), should ensure that our childhood dreams will be realised. At least that’s the plan. [E]



Land Warrior retains the huge, open landscapes of its predecessors.

LOCK AND LOAD, IT'S...

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER NovaLogic

PUBLISHER NovaLogic

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Q1 2001

WEBSITE www.land-warrior.com

IN SUMMARY

Take control of a squad of five veteran soldiers, each adept at a certain skill, and sneak around saving the world from terrorists and other unsavoury characters. When you've finished the single-player mode you can turn your attention to the massive multiplayer options the game is going to support.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

NovaLogic has close links with the US military and this means that all the weapons are going to be authentic and up to date. The developers are also promising a brand new fully-accelerated engine with not a pixel in sight. Look at the screenshots – nice, eh?

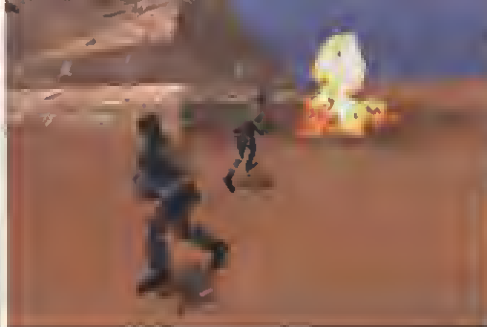
DELTA FORCE: LAND WARRIOR

The special forces are back and this time they're not bringing any pixels

★ **SUFFERING IN FATIGUES** Dave Woods



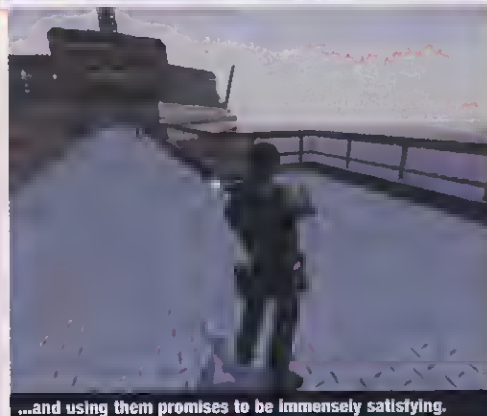
Some stuff exploding. Always nice in action games.



Teamwork is the name of this game.



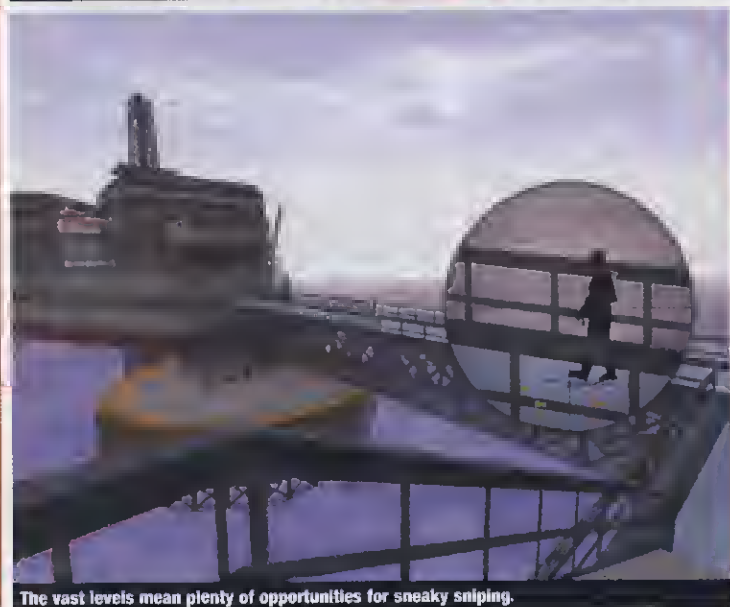
Ridiculously large guns feature prominently...



...and using them promises to be immensely satisfying.



Bored with guns? Hey, you can always resort to simply knifing people.



The vast levels mean plenty of opportunities for sneaky sniping.



Land Warrior should offer some of the most realistic combat yet seen on the PC.

With realistic combat currently taking over from multi-coloured sci-fi shooters (think *Counter-Strike*, the game we're playing, breathing and sleeping at the moment), the news of a sequel to *Delta Force 1* and *2* is very welcome indeed.

Even better is the news that *Land Warrior* is going to ditch the outdated and crusty voxel engine of old and replace it with a brand spanking new,

the huge outdoor landscapes, with the massive line-of-sight opportunities that made the original games so successful. One slight side-effect is that there are no plans to implement tall grass. And no tall grass means no sneaking up on someone on your belly and killing them before they've had a chance to register you're there. Too processor-intensive without the voxels y'see.

As well as the massive multiplayer options, including Voice-Over-Net, *Land Warrior* is going to provide a

usual splattering of new weapons and equipment, including a PSG-1 and a handheld MM1 .40mm semi-automatic grenade launcher. Which sounds pretty nifty.

More than this, the game is actually going to provide you with a glimpse into the future of infantry combat. A subsidiary of NovaLogic has been involved with a contract to modify *Delta Force* for use in the US Army's next-generation *Land Warrior* program, which provides foot soldiers with the sort of technology usually reserved for vehicles: integrated video sights, head-mounted displays, laser range-finders and GPS navigation.

The future is here. Well nearly. You can expect to see the *Delta Force* version of *Land Warrior* early next year, maybe before

if the coders pull their collective fingers out. We'll keep you posted. [P2]

“Gives you the chance to be part of a five-man team who spend their time chewing cigars, rescuing hostages and killing nasty terrorists”

singing and dancing, fully accelerated 3D engine. Even fans would have to admit that the old voxel effort looked pretty terrible, although the developers are promising that while the new engine is going to banish the pixellated look, it's still going to retain

character-driven single-player game that gives you the chance to step into the boots of a veteran soldier as part of a five-man team who spend their time chewing cigars, rescuing hostages and killing nasty terrorists. And, of course, you can expect the



Expect a vast array of new weaponry in the finished game.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

NEWS EDITOR Richie Shoemaker



It always amazes me when US marketing types have to change the name of

something because they somehow think the population will miss the point. A perfect example of this was the film *The Madness of King George*. Based on the stage play *The Madness of George III*, it was the Americans who insisted on the change in name, as they suspected people would think it was a sequel. Granted, Americans may not be up to scratch when it comes to British history, but considering it was *King George III* who was the last British monarch to rule the American colonies, you'd have thought most Yanks would know the difference, especially since *The Madness of George I* and *II* failed to make any significant impact at the US box office.

Name changing is nothing new in the games world either. In a nod to America's gung-ho masses, Eidos's forthcoming stealth game *Project IGI* is known simply as *I'm Going In*, across the pond. EA even changed the name of its two most recent *Need For Speed* games, calling the most recent one *Porsche Challenge* where over here we had simply *Porsche 2000*. Quite why that decision was made is anyone's guess. The same is true of the *Hidden & Dangerous* add-on *Fight For Freedom*, which somehow was translated into *Devil's Bridge*.

The most recent example of marketing gone weird concerns Take 2's *MoHo* which is uncovered in this issue (page 18 to be exact). Our American cousins will be receiving the exact same game of course, only they will know it as *Ball Breakers*, which apart from anything else kind of destroys the mysticism of what *MoHo* is supposed to mean.

So why do publishers feel the need to rename their games? On asking a few UK PR people, the most intelligent answer we received was: "because Americans are a bit weird". Quite clearly they must think the same as us.

TECHHEAD

The latest and greatest hardware news

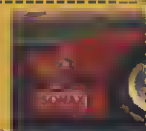
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THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

P.24



ChartTrack

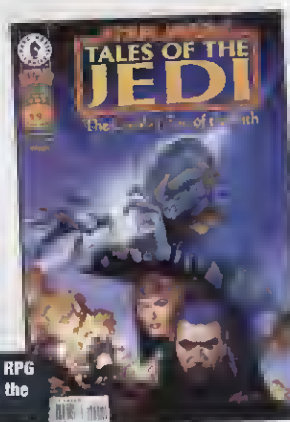
ROLE UP FOR STAR WARS

Set a longer time ago in a galaxy far, far away

Having plundered every conceivable storyline within all of the currently available *Star Wars* films, LucasArts has decided to take us even further back in time for their recently announced *Star Wars* game. Set 4,000 years before events in *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace*, the game, which is as yet unnamed, will chronicle a period "dominated by an epic struggle between the Jedi and the evil Sith."

Although these formative years in the *Star Wars* saga have been covered in comic book form, LucasArts has no plans to use the characters and stories developed by Dark Horse comics, instead we are promised new characters, planets and technologies.

The game is in joint development between LucasArts and *Baldur's Gate* creator Bioware, and will be a 3D role-playing game, set for release in 2002. Much speculation has surrounded the graphics engine, which some have assumed will be based on the *Neverwinter Nights* code, Bioware's next RPG up for release. However, we are told that a new 3D engine will be created from the ground up promising spectacular effects in what will hopefully appease *Star Wars* fans who have been rightfully unimpressed with the recent efforts of LucasArts.



Bioware's *Star Wars* RPG will not be based on the Dark Horse comics.

X MARKS THE PLOT

With the *X-Men* film now out, Irrational Games (of *System Shock 2* fame) appears to have timed the announcement of its next game to perfection.

Although not officially tied in with this summer's superhero flick, *Freedom Force* will at least cash in on those hankering for a game where the characters prefer to wear their underwear over, as it were, and although Wolverine, Storm and Cyclops will be absent, *Freedom Force* will allow players to create superheroes of their own.

Set across New York circa 1960, *Freedom Force* will be a 3D role-playing game. Players will be able to recruit, train and fight a pool of heroes, being able to take up to four into each mission. As well as incredible strengths, some characters will have weaknesses; with bear-like power, one hero may have the temperament of spoilt child, going berserk when things aren't going his way. As well as your typical superhero characters who can channel lightning or move cars with the flick of a wrist, there will be more off-the-wall superheroes who can bounce like rubber or stop time.

For those gamers keen to control more established characters like The Incredible Hulk, Batman or Magneto, Irrational is keen to allow players to recreate their heroes, at least in multiplayer games.

Freedom Force is due for release next Autumn through Crave Entertainment.

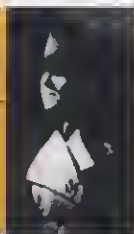


Although Irrational Games has licensed the LithTech 2.0 engine (soon to be used in *Aliens Vs Predator 2*), we don't know whether the engine will be used in *FF*. Our guess is it will.

MAN WHO KNOWS

The latest industry gossip

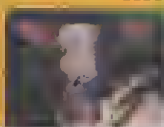
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WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

...Black & White, TF2 and B-17?

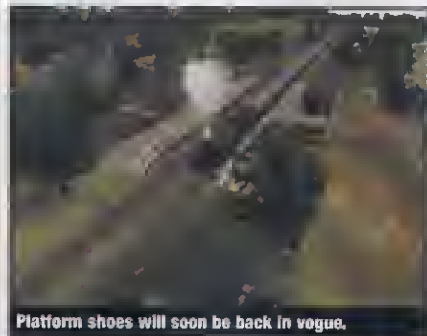
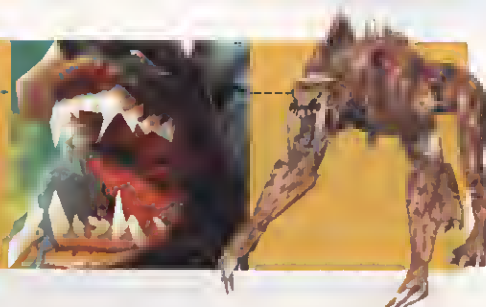
P.27



HOTSHOTS

Take a look at *Giants: Citizen Kabuto* and *Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare*

P.30 & 32



Platform shoes will soon be back in vogue.



There's a metaphor for something here...



Train sims are big in Japan and Microsoft is hoping they'll soon be huge over here.

WHO'S CHUFFED?

Bill Gates and co get up a big head of steam with *Train Simulator*

Following Richard Branson's move from planes to trains, Bill Gates is hoping to prove himself a railroad tycoon with the news that Microsoft is making the same transition with *Train Simulator*.

In development at UK-based Kuju Entertainment, *Train Simulator* will aim to do for locomotive sims what *MS Flight Sim* has done for

aircraft. It'll be a dream come true for Hornby aficionados, with hundreds of miles of track through realistic environments, with players able to take the role of drivers, engineers and – God alone knows why – passengers.

There will be nine locomotives in the game, from steam engines to modern high-speed electric and diesel

trains, each with realistic controls and challenges, ranging from freight and passenger scheduling to negotiating snow-blocked canyons through mountain passes.

Famous rail routes include the Orient Express, The Flying Scotsman, and four scenarios set across Japan and the US. And, as with the *Flight Simulator* series, the 'game' will

feature open-ended architecture to allow other developers to add new scenarios, environments, carriages and trains at a later date.

Barring any major winter disasters such as leaves on the track, *Train Simulator* should be arriving at a platform near you next spring. No doubt a constant stream of add-ons will soon follow.

HIDDEN & SECRETIVE

Once more into the breach, comrades

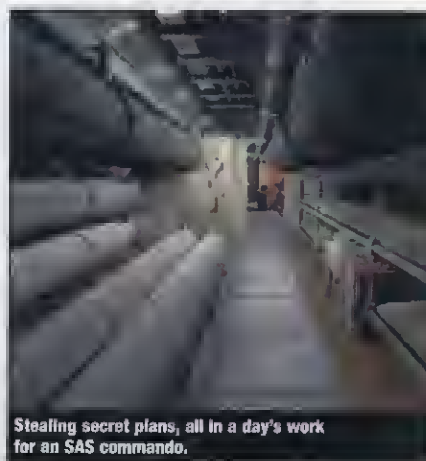
Although we were informed that *Hidden & Dangerous 2*, sequel to by far the finest game to come out of Eastern Europe, was scheduled for release this Christmas, it looks like a spring 2001 or an even later release is more likely.

Currently, Czech developer Illusion Software is still working on the game engine and few gameplay elements have been incorporated. The 3D code, built from

the ground up, is said to be four times more powerful than the original game's *Insanity* engine and will allow for more realistic lighting, animation and shadows, which will do as much to give away your position as that of the enemy.

Set again behind enemy lines during World War II, *Hidden & Dangerous 2* will introduce new weapons and vehicles from the era. Many of the original game's fans

have asked that new sides (American, Russian etc) will also be a part of the sequel and new features such as team-based multiplayer be incorporated. Having played *Counter-Strike* to death recently, a similar feature using WWII models will be more than welcome. Most importantly we are hoping that, unlike the original game, bugs will not infest what was and still is the finest tactical shooter on the planet.



Stealing secret plans, all in a day's work for an SAS commando.

BATTLE REALMS

Who said real-time strategy couldn't be original?

Although on the surface Liquid Entertainment's *Battle Realms* sounds like it's trying to outdo *Shogun*, it is only within the aims of the game that the two titles have any similarity. Where both games place you as a leader of a clan, with a view to uniting a Far Eastern country, *Battle Realms* takes its influence from myth rather than historical reality. The graphics are different too; where *Shogun* is 3D with thousands of 2D bitmapped units on-screen, *Battle Realms* is the opposite, with a 2D view over which small-scale battles are fought between hi-res 3D soldiers.

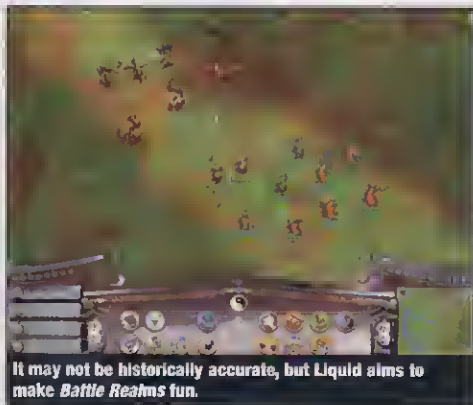
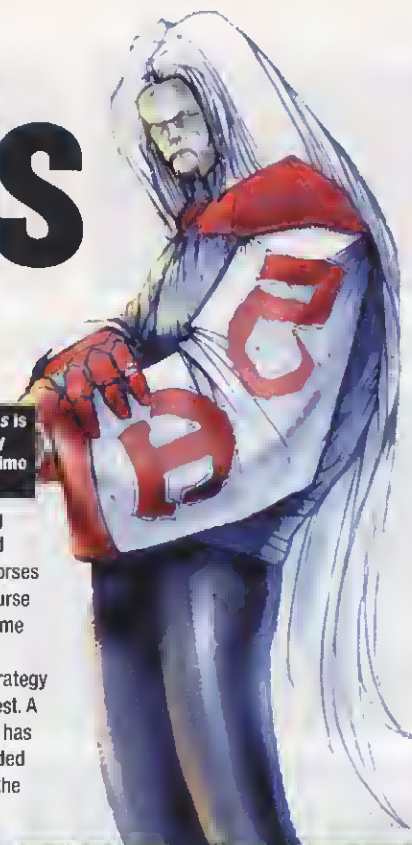
With the leader of the *Battle Realms* team and many of his underlings having worked on the *Command & Conquer* series, Liquid is aiming to create a real-time strategy game with a rich story, fleshing out the gameplay with new elements that attempt to realise a living and interactive world far more advanced than we've seen in other strategy games. Much like RPGs in fact, where the outcome of a battle can be affected not only by strength of numbers, but by utilising the world around you. These aspects will manifest themselves in a number of ways; including using trees for cover, which can give away your position if you run into a flock of easily ruffled birds or like with water, which covers your tracks, but can slow your movements down.

Rather than harvest crops and simply blow the cash on an ever-expanding army, the developers are trying to think of new ways to integrate resource management within the game. An example of this is with cavalry.

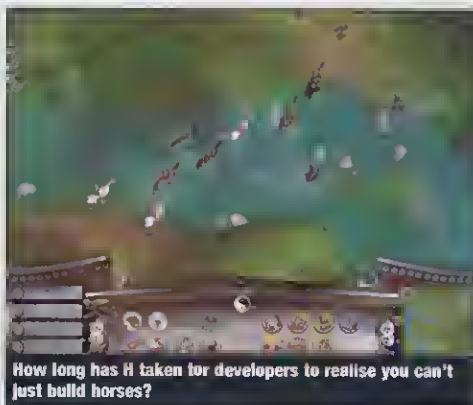
Instead of spending money on some sort of training building, then churning out ranks of horse-mounted troops, in *Battle Realms* you first have to find the horses running wild in the countryside. Doing so will of course have risks, and then you have to shepherd them home and think about training your troops to ride them.

If you've become disillusioned with real-time strategy games, *Battle Realms* may just re-ignite your interest. A rethink about what real-time strategy should mean has been a long time coming and with a new team headed by a Westwood veteran, *Battle Realms* may herald the beginning of a new order.

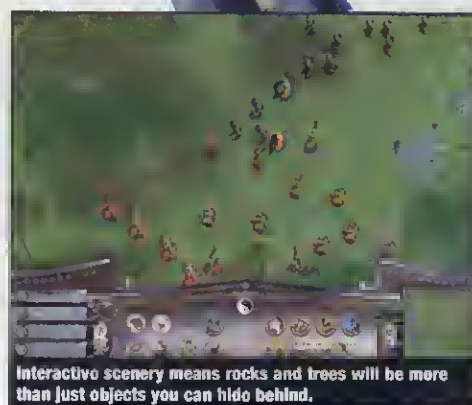
Battle Realms is influenced by Japanese anime animation.



It may not be historically accurate, but Liquid aims to make *Battle Realms* fun.



How long has it taken for developers to realise you can't just build horses?



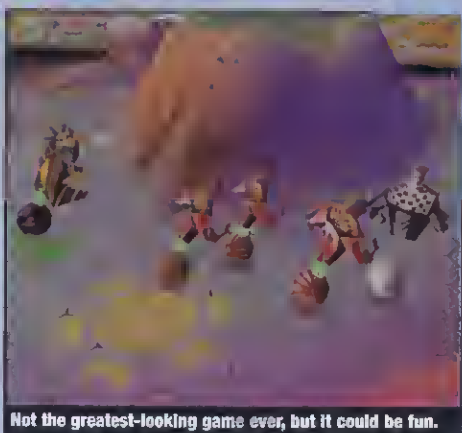
Interactive scenery means rocks and trees will be more than just objects you can hide behind.

LOST TOYS ANNOUNCE DEBUT

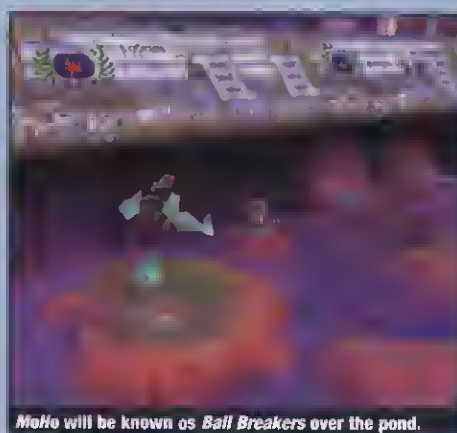
Ex-Bullfrog coders Lost Toys have at last lifted the lid on their games cupboard by showing off their first title *MoHo*. What we thought was originally going to be a bizarre driving game is in fact an equally bizarre beat 'em up, where in a world gone mad, you must fight for your

freedom across a series of gladiatorial arenas. However, there will be five separate game modes, ranging from escape, battle and race missions so, in part, *MoHo* manages to combine fighting, driving, future sports and action into the one game.

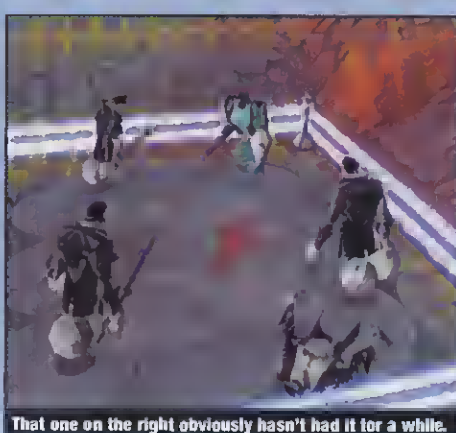
With more than 80 levels and five different characters, each wildly different in terms of look and fighting abilities, *MoHo* sounds and looks like an impressive debut. As soon as we see the game in action we'll be bringing you an in-depth preview. *MoHo* will be out at the end of the year.



Not the greatest-looking game ever, but it could be fun.



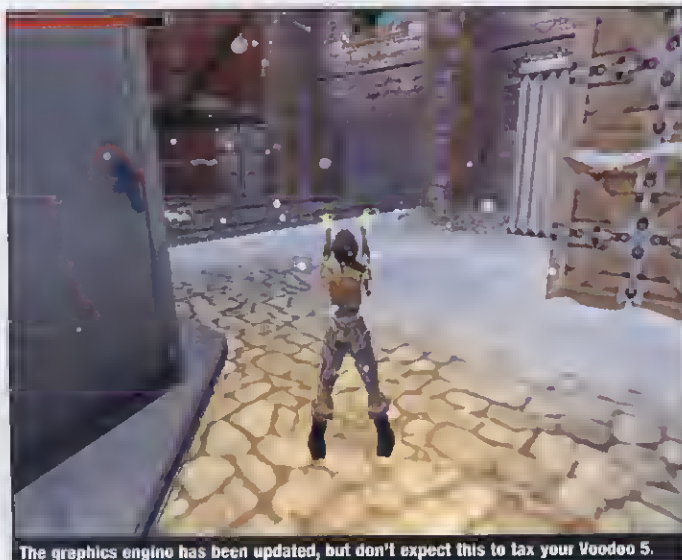
MoHo will be known as *Ball Breakers* over the pond.



That one on the right obviously hasn't had it for a while.



Lara fully clothed! What's going on here then?



The graphics engine has been updated, but don't expect this to tax your Voodoo 5.

Lara can now walk across tightropes – what a talented lass.



TOMB RAIDER V

Proving Lara's *Last Revelation* was far from it, here's news of the next thrilling instalment

Announced back in May at E3 (we must have missed the press conference) was the fifth in the long-running *Tomb Raider* saga. Due for release in November, *Tomb Raider Chronicles* will again see the pendulous charms of Lara Croft bounding across our screens in a similar 3D adventure to the last four.

Curiously, *Tomb Raider Chronicles* starts off at the side of Lara Croft's grave. Missing and presumed dead, mourners will

reminisce over her life in between which a number of levels will kick in where, once again, we can control Lara's actions as she hurls herself around ancient cities dispatching the indigenous wildlife and locals with her trademark panache, using new weapons and skills, one of which is her newly discovered ability to walk across tightropes. No doubt as the game goes on we'll discover Lara is alive and well, especially since next year will see the

release of both the *TR* movie and a new game, set for release on PlayStation 2.

The cameras have started rolling for the movie, with filming around London and at Pinewood Studios well under way. The cast, which includes Angelina Jolie, Iain Glen and *Carry On*'s Leslie Phillips, are all no doubt looking forward to moving on to Iceland and Cambodia, where further shooting is due to take place later this year. The film should be out next summer.

SHORTS

AIR COMMODORE

Developer of the original 1984 Commodore 64 hit *Super Huey*, Cosmi, is poised to release an updated PC sequel, *Super Huey III*. Regarded as one of the original helicopter simulations, *Super Huey* went on to become one of the C64's best-selling games and was one of the first games ever to be used for military training purposes. The 3D-accelerated PC sequel will again aim for realism, offering a range of combat missions, 3D views and even the original version of the game. No UK publisher has been announced, but the game should be available to buy now from www.cosmi.com.

SECOND DELIVERY

Running With Scissors, the developer of 1997's infamous top-down action game *Postal*, has said it is working on a first-person sequel that will include a whole host of online support. *Postal*, some of you may remember, was a game where you played a deranged psychopath, the aim being to kill everyone in sight: children, puppies, police – everyone. Apart from the content, *Postal* – s'cuse the pun – wasn't really worth writing home about. Even so, it will be interesting to see if any publisher is willing to pick up the game after some of the more recent alleged games-related shootings in America.

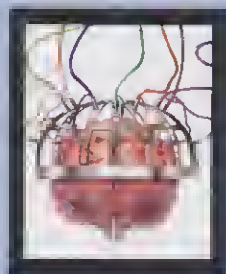
KUNG-FU FIGHTING

Resurrecting the side-scrolling martial arts gameplay of *The Way Of The Exploding Fist II* and *Double Dragon* is Akimbo: *Kung-Fu Hero*, featuring six non-linear worlds across which you must punch, kick and jump to find the dispersed ingredients of a magic spell and defeat a dragon. A demo is due for release shortly, but as yet we are unsure when the final game will be released.

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TECHHEAD

Yet more developments on the graphics card and modem fronts

★ BEHIND ENEMY LINES Carlos Ruiz

3DFX ON THE RAMPAGE



With 3dfx's patented T-Buffer, developers can use depth of field (focus) to draw your attention to different parts of a scene.

The pioneer of 3D acceleration aims to regain the lead from NVIDIA

Yes, you guessed it. Although 3dfx's (www.3dfx.com) Voodoo 4/5 cards have barely been available for five minutes, we are already hearing details of its next chip – codenamed Rampage.

Rampage is the latest example of a trend that has been going on in the computer industry for years. Namely, that a graphics vendor will constantly dismiss the importance of any feature that its product doesn't have, while a competitor with the same feature in its product will endlessly promote that feature's importance.

In this case, the feature in question is Transformation & Lighting (T&L), where a processing unit on the graphics card alleviates the pressure on the main CPU whenever polygon mathematics need to be done, theoretically allowing for much more detailed games. Despite the fact that we've seen nothing on the shelves to take advantage of it since the introduction of the GeForce 256 nearly a year ago, NVIDIA has championed the cause to death.

3dfx was seen to be a little out of touch when it became known that its Voodoo 4/5 cards would not

incorporate T&L, its reasoning being that it would simply not be needed for the current generation of graphics solutions. It was right, of course, but even though there's still no sign of any available games that make use of T&L, it would be madness not to include the feature in a product that is not due to appear until early 2001. And so, enter Rampage, which, providing 3dfx can buck the trend and keep to its release schedule, should blow everything else away – for a few months at least.

Picture a maximum scalable configuration of four Rampage chips and four T&L units, combined with DDR RAM and a memory bandwidth of 25.6/sec. This leaves you with a 3.2 gigapixels/sec fill rate and 300 million polygons/sec – both of which translate into mind-blowing performance. Then there's the photo-realistic rendering, support for DirectX 8.0 features and the second-generation advanced T-Buffer, which spices up existing graphics and provides developers with a multitude of visual effects to play around with.

3dfx will not officially announce Rampage until ECTS at London's Olympia in September and, rest assured, PC ZONE will be there to get all the details.

FACTCANNON

★ Microsoft (www.microsoft.com) has never looked back since its Internet Explorer 4 effectively laid the competition to rest, and the latest version (5.5) will represent the figurehead of the most fully featured and popular browser software on the planet. Subsequent versions of IE will be increasingly integrated into forthcoming Windows operating systems, with the aim being to involve the Internet more with the overall PC experience.



★ With the new DI-701 Gateway/Firewall, D-Link has solved the problem of home Internet security faced by people using small LAN networks and static IP addresses to access the Internet. The new box is cheap, easy to set up and, most importantly, protects your valuable equipment and data from malicious users.



V.92 AS STANDARD

The new dial-up modem spec is on the way

The acceptance of a new standard for dial-up modems comes as a slight surprise, especially after all the talk of next-generation Internet connections, most people thought the whole Net access bandwagon had its eye firmly on the road ahead.

However, it seems not, and as the majority of people use bog-standard phone lines and 56K modems, some developers have seen sense and decided to make life easier for them.

Ordinary BT phone lines max out at 56K, and this is why you'll only ever

see higher speeds on different lines. The original V.90 has been around for ages, having achieved its goal of creating a standard for 56K modems.

However, while not adding to download speed, the new V.92 standard introduces several time-saving features. The first thing users will notice is faster dial-up times, making logging on and off more seamless, and uploading speeds will be increased from V.90's 31.2K to 48K. There will also be a call-waiting feature as standard, so users can



suspend a Net connection to receive or initiate a phone call, and jump back online afterwards without having to redial.

Most of us will be content with our 56K modems until faster access becomes affordable, and some may even be able to upgrade via a small piece of software to the new standard. Either way, there will be V.92 modems available soon and we'll give you all the details as soon as we have them.

★ Nike has teamed up with S3's Rio division to produce a stopwatch-sized wearable MP3 player that fits on the arm, allowing the wearer to enjoy up to two hours of CD-quality tunes while on the move. The US price is \$279, so the UK equivalent should be around £200.





The graphics have a nice, stylised look about them.

WACKY RACES

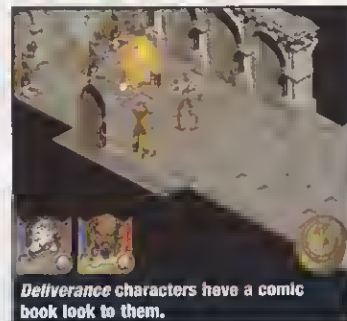
The recently released Dreamcast racer *Wacky Races* is making its way to PC soon, via publisher Intergames. The game will allow players to play as each of the characters from the hit Hanna-Barbera cartoon series, including Penelope Pitstop, Dastardly and his canine sidekick Mutley and, our favourites, The Ant Hill Mob. The aim is obviously to come first in a number of races, after which new tracks, cars and weapons become available. We gatecrashed the offices of our sister publication *Official Dreamcast Magazine* to have a look at the game and were suitably impressed with the graphics. The PC version should be practically identical, so a fun and thoroughly untaxing game is assured. Release is set for September and we'll have the full review next month.

DELIVER US FROM EVIL

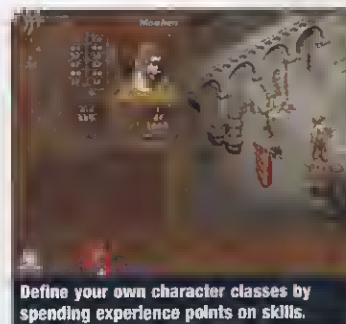
Hot on the heels of *Icewind Dale* and *Diablo II* comes another isometric role-playing game in the form of *Deliverance From The Dark* from relative unknowns Studio Blue.

Apart from the fact that there will be no classes within the game (a warrior can become a wizard given time) there isn't much in this game that sets it apart as far as we can see. However, with real-time exploration and turn-based combat it will offer a more tactical game than most and *X-COM* fans hankering for a similar game in a fantasy setting will be well served.

Also quite interesting is the game editor, which as well as allowing dungeoners the chance to create maps, items characters and scripts, will allow players to create their own spells making *Deliverance From The Dark* virtually limitless in its scope.



Deliverance characters have a comic book look to them.



Define your own character classes by spending experience points on skills.



Strategy fans will welcome the turn-based combat.

//START

>> IT IS THE NEW MILLENNIUM . THE WORLD HAS CHANGED AND WE MUST CHANGE WITH IT . WE MUST BE READY FOR THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE . FOR THE FIRST TIME THE VIRUS THREATENS TO OVERTAKE US . WE HOLD THE FATE OF EVERY PERSON ON THIS PLANET IN OUR HANDS AND MUST TAKE STEPS TO KEEP THE SITUATION IN PERSPECTIVE . THE TIME HAS COME FOR ACTION .

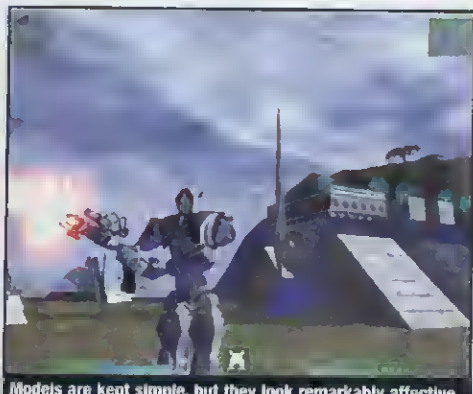
>>THE NEW WAVE OF NANOTECHNOLOGY WILL ALLOW OUR AGENTS TO PLAY THEIR ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF OUR WORLD . YOUR ENCODER IS ACTIVE AND THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SECURITY MUST BE MAINTAINED .

WE WILL BE PLAYING BACK YOUR RECENT REPORTS FOR ANY NEW INFORMATION . GENTLEMEN, THE GAME IS BEGINNING .

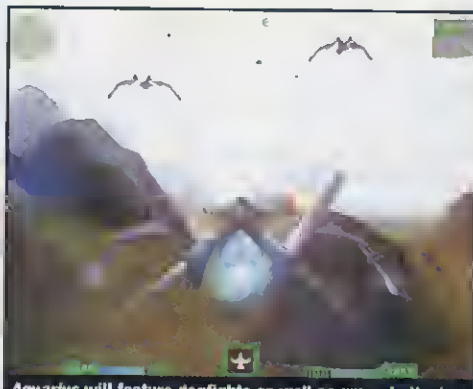
>>A HIGHER LEVEL OF AUTHORITY IS IMMINENT . ALL CURRENT AGENCIES WILL COME UNDER QUESTION . EVERYTHING MUST BE DONE TO RETAIN THE BALANCE . REVERT TO ALERT STATUS . AWAIT FURTHER COMMUNICATION .

//END

TURN TO PAGE 67 FOR DECODING INSTRUCTIONS.



Models are kept simple, but they look remarkably affective.



Aquarius will feature dogfights as well as ground attacks.



Real-time shadows will allow you keep a track of time.

IS THIS THE AGE OF AQUARIUS?

Action and strategy combine over an alien world

In a nod to Pandemic Studios' *Battlezone* series (not the '70s arcade version), *Aquarius* is an action/strategy hybrid, allowing you to collect valuable resources, select a number of land, air and seaborne units, as well as control each one individually in the first-person.

The storyline (you may have heard this one before) involves you as the commander of an Earth colony ship, who upon discovering a nice bit of land then finds a hostile alien race keen to deprive you of its possession. Typical.

The world over which the war is about to unfold is *Aquarius*, a diverse planet which will allow players to fight over every conceivable terrain, from arctic tundra to arid desert. Although sci-fi, the developers are keen not to stray too far from the laws of physics and, across water especially, we'll be able to see bullets and bombs transform the landscape.

Offering a customisable interface, what may well make *Aquarius* one to watch is your computer opponent: rather

than script a series of traditional missions, the developers are coding what they term 'The Strategist', an AI opponent that will never play the same game twice. If that's too difficult, rather than employ the tactic of setting easy, medium and hard opponents, you'll be able to select from aggressive, defensive, bloodthirsty or psychotic. The aim, it seems, is to give the illusion of fighting against a 'real' opponent, rather than a PC. We'll know by the end of the year if the developers will be able to pull off such a feat.

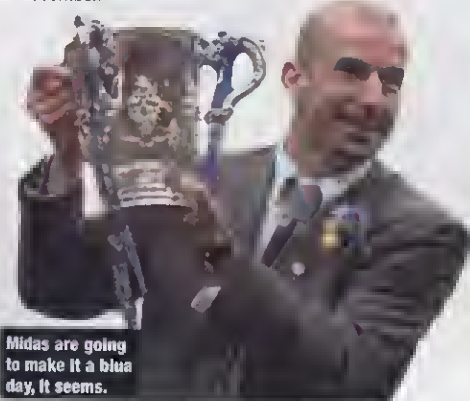
VIALLI'S MIDAS TOUCH

Midas Interactive is hoping to cut themselves a share of *Championship Manager's* pie with Gianluca Vialli's *Premiership Manager*, endorsed by – you've guessed it – Chelsea's Italian manager. (And we thought all he was interested in was the Champions League – Ed.)

Worryingly for CM-obsessed Chelsea fans, *GVP* will not feature rows of meaningless statistics, instead the developers are aiming to provide detailed in-game highlights, with the hope that those on the bench will be able to gauge the strengths of their players and opponents by watching them at work.

Thankfully, Chelsea won't be the only team you can take charge of. According to the press release you can lead any of the English league teams, as well as any of those in Spain, Germany, Italy or France. Steve Hill will be upset to learn that his only way of guiding Chester City back into the Nationwide League is to wait for *CM Season 00/01*. Still, you can't please everyone.

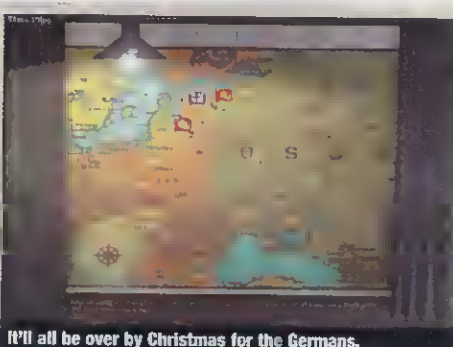
Gianluca Vialli's Prem... etc, will be released in November.



Midas are going to make it a blue day, it seems.



The Russian winter sets in.



It'll all be over by Christmas for the Germans.



Units will gain experience throughout the conflict.



Traditionalists will welcome the dull top-down view.

PANZER GENERAL PROMOTED

Mattel Interactive has announced *Panzer General III: Scorched Earth*, a 3D accelerated turn-based wargame that aims to cover the bitter war on Germany's Eastern Front during WWII. Four campaigns will be released with the game, with a total of 250 branching missions, which should ensure that no two games will ever be the same. Players will be able to play as the Commander of either the German or Russian armies, with a random battle generator included for those who prefer to direct American and British forces. Release is set for the end of the year.

STARLINES

In development from UK-based company Positech is a business sim going by the name of *Starlines*. As the name suggests, *Starlines* puts you at the head of a fleet of spaceships, where to make money you have to ferry cargo and passengers between planets, space stations and other far-flung outposts.

Apparently inspired by the books of J. K. Rowling and Douglas Adams (we like), the game will feature a healthy dose of resource management as players manage their fleet, the crew aboard each ship and the goods they are tasked with delivering. Players can choose a number of ways to approach the game and can run illegal goods between star systems, or even employ a skeleton crew to save money.

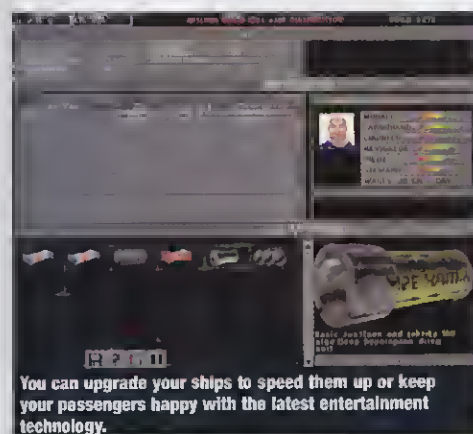
Some of you will be pleased to hear that *Starlines* will run quite happily on a P166, which means you'll soon have something new to play after five years of *Doom*.



These planes are some of the most detailed ever in a flight simulation.



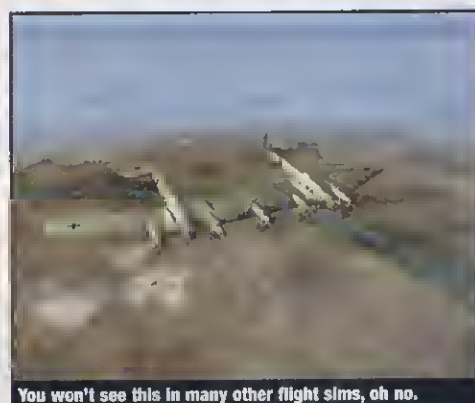
No way, BA.



You can upgrade your ships to speed them up or keep your passengers happy with the latest entertainment technology.



Your competitors will try absolutely anything to stop you making money.



You won't see this in many other flight sims, oh no.



Ground attack is this game's speciality.

BLUE BYTE SEE RED

Blue Byte has announced it will be releasing its first flight simulation early next year, having just signed up the Russian-made WWII combat sim *IL-2 Sturmovik*.

For those who missed the news piece a few months back, *IL-2 Sturmovik* is based on the air war on Germany's Eastern Front during WWII. You'll be able to pilot a whole host of aircraft, nearly 20 in total – although many of these will be variants of German and Russian fighters. Up to another 20 aircraft will be non-flyable,

mostly bombers and reconnaissance planes, as well as a few of Germany's more bizarre creations such as the Siamese-twinning He111 you can see in these screenshots.

Ground attack will be the focus of the game, especially since the Russians preferred to attack German ground forces rather than the Luftwaffe, although for fans of dogfighting there will be plenty of opportunity to chalk the odd kill on your fuselage. Consequently, *IL-2's* 3D engine will feature detailed ground

objects and realistic terrain, as well as impressive weather effects. Having seen the game in action, we were suitably impressed with the damage modelling and many of the game's numerous other features. As well as nearly 40 aircraft, more than 65 ground vehicles will be in the game, from anti-aircraft guns to tanks and ships, unfortunately, ground troops may not make it in.

Release is set for next spring, before which we'll make sure to revisit the game in a full preview.

CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what *you* think

THE TOP 10

JUL	AUG	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
NE	1	F1 GRAND PRIX 3	GEOFF CRAMMOND	HASBRO	80%
3	2	CHAMP MAN 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
1	3	DIABLO II	BLIZZARD	HAVAS	72%
NE	4	ICEWIND DALE	BLACK ISLE	INTERPLAY	75%
2	5	SNOGUN: TOTAL WAR	CREATIVE ASSEMBLY	EA	93%
RE	6	QUAKE III ARENA	ID SOFTWARE	ACTIVISION	89%
5	7	UNREAL TOURNAMENT	EPIC/DIGITAL ILLUSIONS	INFOGRAMES	90%
4	8	VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE - REDEMPTION	NIHILISTIC	ACTIVISION	90%
RE	9	ORIVER	REFLECTIONS	INFOGRAMES	78%
RE	10	PNARAOH	IMPRESSIONS	HAVAS	80%

THE TOP 10

JUL	AUG	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	SCORE
NE	1	F1 GRAND PRIX 3	GEOFF CRAMMOND	HASBRO	80%
2	2	THE SIMS	MAXIS	EA	85%
NE	3	ICEWIND DALE	BLACK ISLE	INTERPLAY	75%
4	4	DIABLO II	BLIZZARD	HAVAS	72%
1	5	SNOGUN: TOTAL WAR	CREATIVE ASSEMBLY	EA	93%
3	6	CHAMP MAN 99/00	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	92%
NE	7	EARTH 2150	TOPWARE	MATTEL	84%
NE	8	VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE	NIHILISTIC	ACTIVISION	90%
5	9	AOE II: THE AGE OF KINGS	ENSEMBLE STUDIOS	MICROSOFT	89%
RE	10	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON	CHRIS SAWYER	HASBRO	82%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 2000)

COMPETITION WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer this simple question:

What was the name of Geoff Crammond's hit F1 sim that came out for the BBC Microcomputer in 1984?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with all the information requested, to the address below.

① Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18

② Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies

③ Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (CPCZ0010A), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ. Closing date: Thursday 21 Sep.

④ Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.



Grand Prix 3 takes pole position.

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

The last month has seen the No 1 spot change hands almost on a weekly basis as first *Diablo II*, then *Icewind Dale* and finally *Grand Prix 3* shot to the top of the charts in subsequent weeks. Considering how popular Blizzard games are, I have to admit to being a little surprised at seeing *Diablo II* capitulate so easily, especially to *Icewind Dale*, despite the success of *Baldur's Gate*. *Grand Prix 3*'s place at the top, however, was a certainty from the day it was announced, but I imagine its popularity may not be quite as enduring as its two predecessors – but then not being an F1 fan, I'm probably not the right man to ask.

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Finally a chart with some half-decent games, with plenty of top RPG slashers. I think I'll go and put on my elf outfit now..."

OaRM, London

"What the hell – not one good game at all in this month's charts! Just a bunch of dull, mediocre rubbish: two linear RPGs, *The Sims* and a Grand Prix game – all unspectacular games, well, apart from *Shogun*."

Meeja Nor, Sheffield

"Why is *Earth 2150* in the Top 10 and not *Ground Control*? The latter is definitely the best futuristic RTS. I'm surprised too that *Vampire* is lower than the other two RPGs. I guess they have larger fan bases though. And *The Sims*? Are people buying a second copy or something? It's been in the charts for months."

Shappyt, Rochdale

"Well, it all looks very serious doesn't it? There's not a single 3D shoot 'em up in there! RPGs are starting to take over, with *Diablo II*, *Icewind Dale*, *Vampire* and next month we'll also have the wonderful *Deus Ex*. Overall, lots of serious typical PC games: sims, RPGs and strategy games. An interesting turn of events."

Mike Price, Herefordshire

"Where did *Rollercoaster Tycoon* come from? It must be out on budget or something. Maybe it is time to buy it then."

I played *Shogun* in the store for a while. I was behind that computer until closing time. I should buy that too. Say goodbye to my social life."

Mark, Nelsink

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

- 1 **Kingpin: Life Of Crime** (Interplay)
- 2 **Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace** (Activision)
- 3 **Hidden & Dangerous** (Take 2)
- 4 **Aliens Vs Predator** (Fox)
- 5 **Championship Manager 3** (Eidos)

2 YEARS AGO...

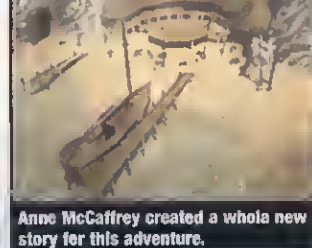
- 1 **Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines** (Eidos)
- 2 **MechCommander** (Microprose)
- 3 **Premier Manager 98** (Gremlin)
- 4 **Unreal (GT Interactive)**
- 5 **Microsoft Plus!** (Microsoft)

5 YEARS AGO...

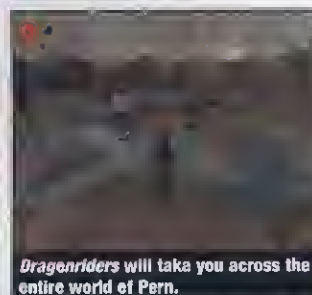
- 1 **Star Trek TNG: A Final Unity** (Microprose)
- 2 **Terminal Velocity (US Gold)**
- 3 **Indy Car Racing** (Virgin)
- 4 **FX Fighters (Phillips)**
- 5 **Star Wars: Dark Forces** (Virgin)



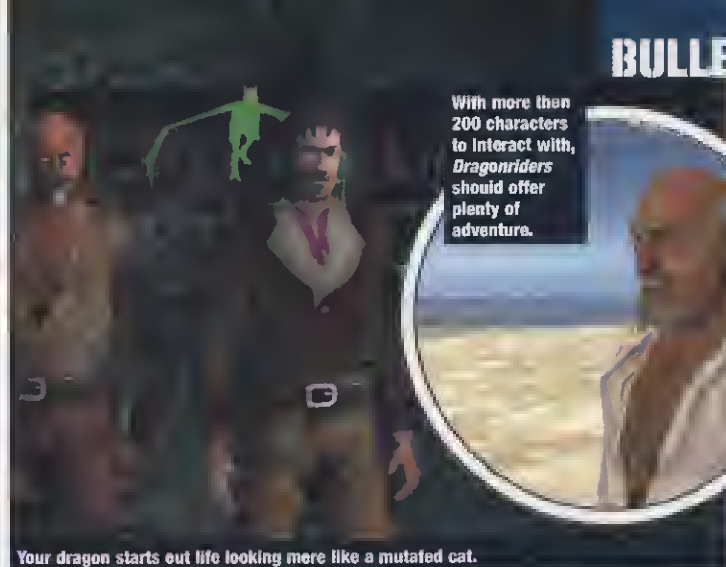
Why take the tube when you can ride a dragon?



Anne McCaffrey created a whole new story for this adventure.



Dragonriders will take you across the entire world of Pern.



Your dragon starts out life looking more like a mutated cat.

With more than 200 characters to interact with, *Dragonriders* should offer plenty of adventure.

DRAGONS TAKE FLIGHT

Anne McCaffrey's *Pern* chronicles are coming to a PC near you very soon. We await with fiery breath

When UK publisher Grolier decided it was going to pull out of games publishing a year or so back, we thought that we might have heard the last of them, especially since its last game *Xenocracy* was something of a less than impressive swansong. However, it seems to have resurfaced with a new name (Ubi Studios UK) as well as a promising title, a 3D RPG adventure, based on an original story from fantasy author Anne McCaffrey.

Set across McCaffrey's world of Pern, the game casts you as D'Kor, a dragonrider whose task, it seems, is to save the world from an organism called The Thread, which apart from being deeply unsocial, can destroy life just by coming into contact with it. Nasty stuff.

Set across five huge chapters, *Dragonriders* will feature plenty of subquests with more than 200 characters to interact with. By talking to, and ultimately violently dispensing with, various

personalities the player will be able to develop new skills and abilities. Being a dragonrider of course means we can expect plenty of action, both on land and in the air, and apart from levelling up your character, your trusty fire-breathing sidekick can also gain new skills.

For fans of McCaffrey's work, *Dragonriders* will be a dream come true. Thankfully, the wait is almost over, as *Dragonriders* is due for release this autumn.

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WANTED COVER DISC PRODUCERS

Dennis Publishing, Britain's largest publisher of computer magazines, is looking for cover disc producers to work within its expanding Electronic Publishing Unit. The position primarily involves building the company's cover CDs and DVDs, including those for *PC ZONE*, *PC Gear*, *PC Pro*, *Computer Shopper* and *Computer Buyer*. Applicants should have a good understanding of software, games, multimedia and the Internet

and enthusiasm for all things PC. A related technology or multimedia degree, or any experience of CD and DVD authoring, is an advantage but not essential. If you're a graduate looking for your first step into the fast-moving world of magazine publishing and think you fit the bill, please send your CV with a covering letter to: Sarah Gilliver, EPU Production Manager, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1P 7HJ or email us at Jobs@dennis.co.uk

EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMO

PCZONE #93

DEUS EX

EXCLUSIVE MINI-FIGURE FOR THE ULTIMATE FIGHTER

EXCLUSIVE TERMINUS

PLUS! OPEN TENNIS 2000 - COUNTER STRIKE 6.6

MDK 2 - THE REALM - AI WARS: THE AWAKENING

PCZONE #93

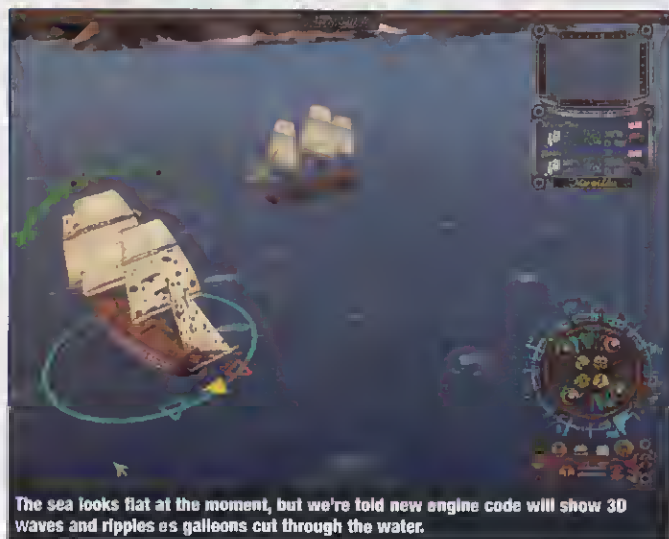


And you thought wizards wore pointy hats and flowing robes.

NOMADS LAND

Urban Assault developer Radon Labs – whose name suggests a interest in washing machines as opposed to PCs – has announced *Nomads*, a 3D strategy action game set on a planet of constantly shifting land masses that float among the clouds. In it you are a wizard technician able to fly between the floating islands, from which you must harvest valuable resources and build factories, power plants and erect defences. Both you and your enemies have a range of bizarre flying machines at your disposal, from zeppelins and biplanes, to even more exotic technologies. The overall aim is to simply expand your realm and defeat other wizard technicians with the same designs.

Changing weather patterns will be a constant hazard, as will the gradual shifts from day to night. Interestingly, we are told the game will have no level borders, hazarding a parallel with Bungie's *Halo*, although in this case we shall have to reserve judgement until we see the game in action. However, the bizarre setting and ambitious mix of real-time strategy and aerial combat will mean that we shall be following development closely until a publisher shows interest. *Nomads* is due for completion by the end of the year.



The sea looks flat at the moment, but we're told new engine code will show 3D waves and ripples as galleons cut through the water.

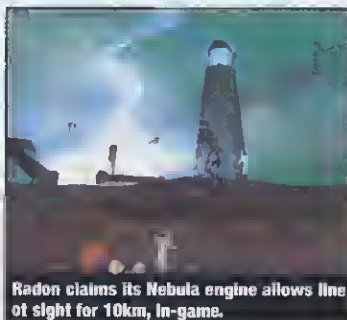
FRAGGING IN THE RIGGING

Not to be confused with its RPG-style pirate game *Sea Dogs*, developer Akella is sailing out with another sea-based title using the same 3D graphics engine, this time with a more historical flavour.

Age Of Sail II, due to be published by Take 2 this autumn, features more than 2000 ships from the late 18th century, allowing players to take command of HMS Victory at the Battle Of Trafalgar or the USS Constitution during the American Civil War. As battles were usually slow-paced affairs, with cannons often taking minutes to reload, players will be able to speed up the game to their liking and as they climb through the ranks, orders can be given to captains on other ships. More than 100 missions will be in the game, with navies from 11 countries, all of which you can serve with, or wage war against.



To fund your war machines you must harvest valuable resources from each floating island.



Radon claims its Nebula engine allows line of sight for 10km, in-game.



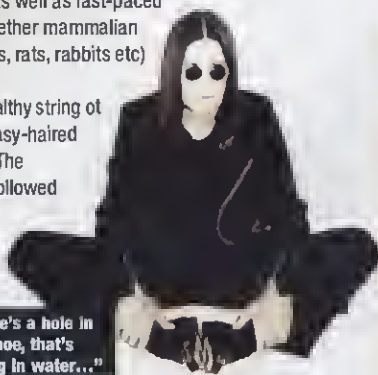
You can join in the dogfighting fun by taking control of any of the aircraft.

THE OZZMAN COMETH

Following in the grand tradition of Iron Maiden and Kiss, the incoherent 'Godfather Of Metal' and ex-frontman of Black Sabbath, Ozzy Osbourne, is set to star in his very own game.

Ozzy's Savage Skies is being developed by newcomers iRock and, as you would expect, will feature a number of Osbourne tracks throughout, empowered, by "interactive music technology". The game, due for release early next year, will be a first-person action affair, unsurprisingly dark, and will include vehicular combat and adventure elements as well as fast-paced combat on foot. It is yet to be confirmed whether mammalian cranial mastication (biting the heads off bats, rats, rabbits etc) will feature as part of the action.

While PlayStation continues to draw a healthy string of dance artists, it seems the PC's link with greasy-haired ageing rockers is strengthening all the time. The lamentable Iron Maiden-themed *Ed Hunter*, followed by the infinitely better Kiss game *Psycho Circus*, seems to have spawned a new breed of metal machine musicals. Where this worrying trend will end is anyone's guess, but until Europe's *Final Countdown* finds its way onto retail shelves, we remain optimistic.



"There's a hole in my shoe, that's letting in water..."



Savage Skies will utilise the RF Engine to render huge outdoor environments.

TICKERTAPE

STARTS++ As is the case with big-selling games, *Diablo II* is due for the expansion pack treatment, with an add-on that will include new spells, missions and equipment. It should be ready for Christmas. **++STOP++** WWII real-time strategy game *Sudden Strike* (which will be reviewed next month) also has an add-on in development and there are concrete plans for a sequel as well. We've been told that a North African campaign is on the cards, whether this will be part of the expansion or the sequel is not known. **++STDP++** After the sad ending of the *X-COM: Genesis* project, and *X-COM: Alliance* only recently putting its troubled development behind it, the long-running and critically acclaimed series that was once in danger of ending, seems now to have a new lease of life with rumours of two new *X-COM* games in development: *X-COM 7* (title to be confirmed) will be a return to the game's isometric turn-based roots while *X-COM: Enforcer* will be a third-person action adventure. **++STOP++** The *Ungeon Keeper* series seems to have stalled with news that Bullfrog has stopped work on the second sequel due to commitments with its expanded next-gen console development. **++STDP++** There's a rumour going around that an unknown company has bought the *Thief* licence, meaning that although the developers of both previous *Thief* games, Looking Glass Studios, has closed shop, we could see a third instalment in the series. We'll keep you posted. **++STOP++** While we wait patiently for final reviewable code for Planetmoon's impressive *Giants* (Hotshots, page 30), we've heard that a sequel is already on the way. **++ENDS++**

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

The place to get the latest news on the games that have been delayed



"Well hello there, boys."

BLACK & WHITE

LAST SEEN: PC ZONE #93

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: Summer 2000

NEW RELEASE DATE: November 10

First the good news: *Black & White* is ready. The bad news, as if you hadn't already guessed, is that we won't be seeing it for a couple of months yet. This short delay is being caused by extensive play-testing and balancing, so we shouldn't complain really. Just imagine buying a copy of the game that's promising to be one of the best of the year, only to find that it's unfinished, bugged and unbalanced. Kind of puts it in perspective, doesn't it? So if you're thinking of complaining about the delay, DON'T. We guarantee that this one's going to be well worth the wait.

B-17 2: THE MIGHTY EIGHTH

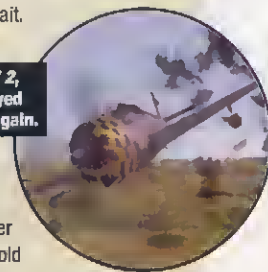
LAST SEEN: PC ZONE #89

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: March 2000

NEW RELEASE DATE: October 2000

Way back in issue 89, we told you that *B-17 2* was on the verge of release. We're now on issue 94 and we still haven't seen so much as a glimpse of it. Worse still, it looks like it could be another two months before *B-17 2* makes it onto the shelves. We won't hold our breaths. With any luck we'll be able to bring you an in-depth preview over the next couple of issues, with all of the details on what could be the greatest flight sim of all time. Hopefully.

B-17 2, delayed yet again.



TEAM FORTRESS 2: BROTHERHOOD OF ARMS

LAST SEEN: PC ZONE #86

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: Spring 2000

NEW RELEASE DATE: Christmas 2000

Online gamers everywhere will be wringing their hands in frustration at the news that *Team Fortress 2* has been delayed again. The reason for this is that developers Valve are inserting a new 3D engine, which will make *TF2*'s graphics and gameplay more realistic than ever. With everyone constantly banging on about how important these two features are in modern games, let's not be too hard on the team that bought us *Half-Life*. After all, if their past performances are anything to go by, *TF2* could be another masterpiece.

"Bloody pigeons."



The Man who KNOWS

ON YOUR BIKE

In what must rank as one of the weakest publicity stunts yet conceived, Lara Croft's self-proclaimed number one fan is cycling from Amsterdam to Derby to meet her. Niels Bernsden has dedicated his recent life to the fictional character, and writes to her regularly, signing his letters as "the one who always, always will give for, care for and love Lara Croft". A fan since the first *Tomb Raider*, Niels gibbered: "Lara means a lot to me. She has changed my life. Things I wouldn't do in the past like all the extreme things that Lara is doing, I'm doing now. For example, scuba diving, mountain climbing, extreme skiing and, of course, adventuring." He also claimed: "Lara Croft is much more than just a beautiful archaeologist adventurer. She's intelligent, strong... she's got an enormous amount of willpower, she's extremely athletic... and she's very charming... to the fans, that is. To me she's the one... the number one." Despite the fact that he is clearly a very disturbed individual, Niels' trip comes with the full backing of developer Core Design, at whose HQ the journey will end. There he will meet the team, and enjoy a dinner date with the 'real-lite' Lara Croft, child model Lucy Clarkson. Let's hope she's got a good bodyguard.

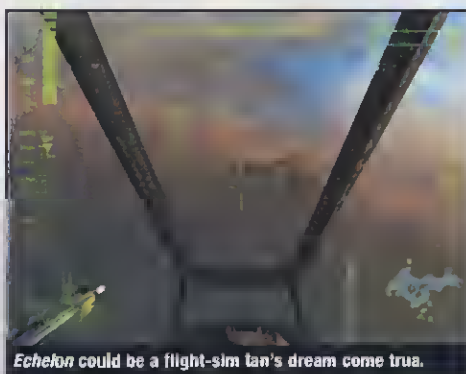
Further obsessive behaviour involves F1 ace, Jacques Villeneuve, who has been exposed as a goblin-fancier. His girlfriend, Dannii Minogue, told *ZONE's* sister magazine, *Maxim*: "Dh he's so into all of that. He even plays it online now. I said to him the other day 'Look baby, really nerdy people play this game. Do you really think it's the sort of thing an F1 driver should be doing? You've got to think about your image.'" Dannii's image is certainly worth thinking about, particularly the shot of her showering in a see-through bra.

Music news sees Nine Inch Nails drummer, Chris Vrenna, following lead singer Trent Reznor into the murky world of game soundtracks. Vrenna is to compose the music for *American McGee's Alice*. Publisher Electronic Arts said Vrenna's music will complement McGee's "morbid" adaptation of the *Alice in Wonderland* novels, and the game will also include a separate CD featuring Vrenna's efforts. Two words: Singing drummers. Two more words: Phil Collins.

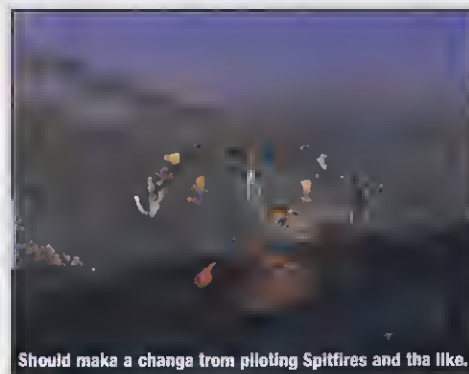
And finally, game 'designer' John Romero has started updating his website. The eponymous domain was left fallow for years while he attempted to salvage the unmitigated disaster that was *Daikatana*. Romero bragged: "I'm still working on the site... it's going to be pretty big. Maybe my bong-buddy Levelord will submit to an interview." For the uninitiated, Levelord is a permanently stoned hippy who worked on *SiN*, and a bong is a device for ingesting marijuana. So that's why *Daikatana* was three years late...



Not the most useful view in the game, but it shows that each pilot will be almost as detailed as the ships they are flying.



Echelon could be a flight-sim fan's dream come true.



Should make a change from piloting Spitfires and the like.

ECHELON

Futuristic flight sim takes off from Russia

Somewhere between a full-on flight sim and a space combat game is *Echelon* from Russian developer Buka. Set more than 200 years into the future, the game is played over a number of planets, each with varying weather conditions from Earth-like rainstorms to energy-draining ion storms over the more harsh environments.

Rather more demanding than something like *Starlancer*, Buka is hoping *Echelon* will attract both hardcore simulation and sci-fi fans, by introducing a deep storyline and implementing realistic physics. There will be nearly 20

different piloting craft, each varying in capabilities and striking roles, with players able to order around wingmen as they ascend the ranks. The range of missions will follow the usual flight-sim formula, varying from straight dogfights to escort, reconnaissance and ground attack.

Release is set for this winter in the US through Bethesda, however, no details of a UK release have been made available. Saying that, with Bethesda's links with Virgin and Interplay in the UK and some favourable reports from US websites that have been playing early code, a UK release may not be far away.

OUR MOST PLAYED

Usually when it comes to asking the team what games we are looking forward to, a whole string of titles pour forth from across the banks of monitors at the PC ZONE cavern. This time, however, talk was more about what we had rather than what we were waiting for. Content for the time being with *Counter-Strike* during the day and *Deus Ex* at night, we thought we'd instead list what's residing on our hard drives.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Counter-Strike Beta 6.6 | www.counter-strike.net (Out now) |
| 2 Deus Ex | Eidos (Out now) |
| 3 Star Trek: Voyager - Elite Force | Activision (Reviewed on page 58) |
| 4 Championship Manager - Season 2000/D1 Beta | Eidos (Full preview next issue) |
| 5 Sudden Strike Beta | CDV (Full review next issue) |
| 6 Firearms 2.2 | www.firearmsmod.com (Reviewed on page 106) |
| 7 EverQuest: The Ruins Of Kunark | Ubi Soft (Out now) |
| 8 Shogun: Total War | EA (Out now) |
| 9 Grand Prix 3 | Hasbro (Reviewed on page 64) |
| 10 Rocket Arena 3 | Free (Reviewed on page 109) |

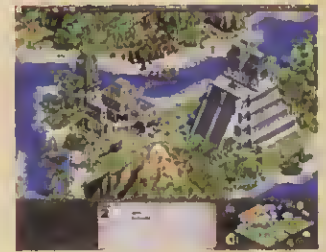
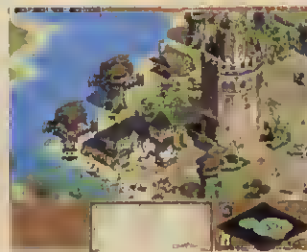
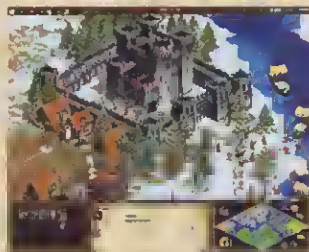


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Microsoft

HOTSHOTS

This highly anticipated game is nearly upon us

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

★ Interplay — Out October

After playing a multiplayer version of *Giants* at E3 back in May, we were hoping that the game was nearing completion. Now, quite a few months later, *Giants* really is nearing completion. Recently, developer Planet Moon has been Stateside, recording the voices for the game and, in a few weeks' time, we should

have playable code in our hands and, seconds later, on our hard drives. From what we've tasted, *Giants* really is as good as it looks.

Played in the third person (there is also a first-person mode), *Giants* allows you to choose one of three species, who are all intent on ruling the alien landscape. Kabuto, the big

ugly chap, is one such creature, who uses brute force to conquer his enemies. The Sea Reapers (those ethereal ladies) are more mystical and the Meccaryns, with their jetpacks and weapons, rely on technology.

Across the world, players must make use of the native creatures, either by consuming them in the case

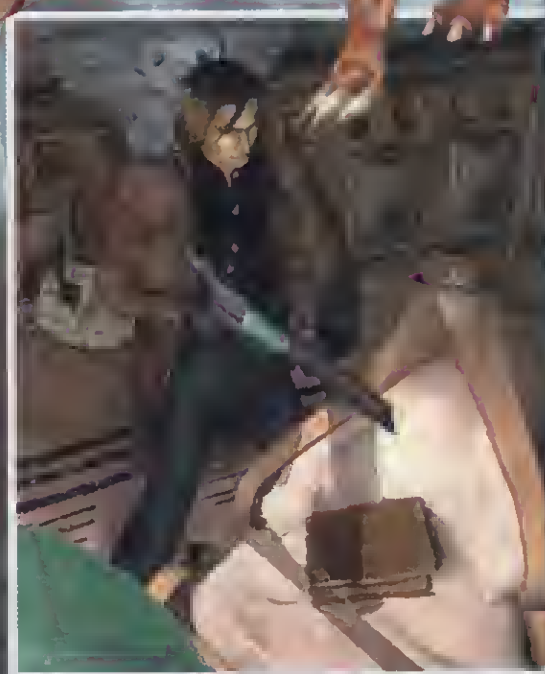
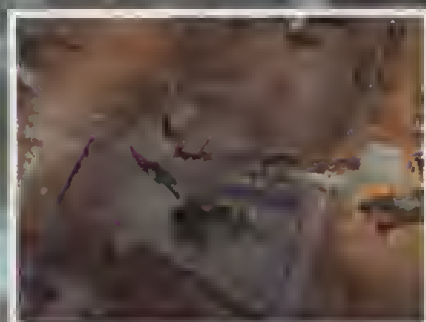
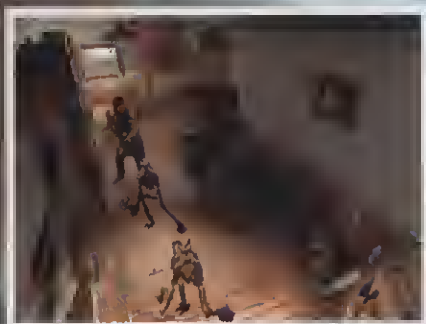
of Kabuto, or using them to set traps or harvest resources.

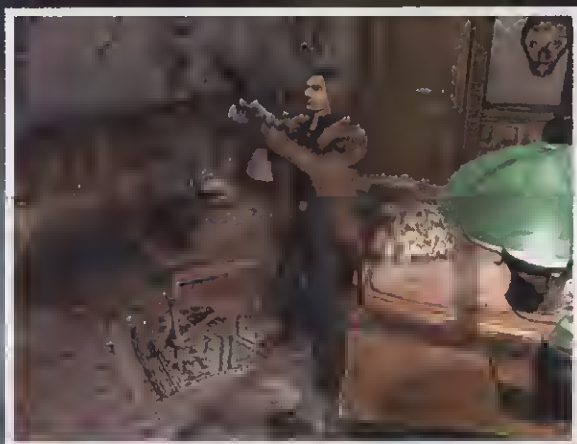
With such gorgeous, astonishing graphics as well as a soundtrack by Mark Snow of *X-Files* fame, *Giants: Citizen Kabuto* is one of the few games that we are genuinely excited about. Look out for an in-depth review next issue.



HOTSHOTS

Dust off those brown trousers and ready yourself for the original horror adventure





ALONE IN THE DARK: THE NEW NIGHTMARE

★ Infogrames — Out November

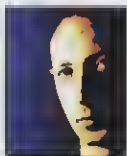
There isn't much we haven't told you already about the fourth *Alone In The Dark* adventure soon to be released by Infogrames. If you've been living in the dark yourself, be aware only that the game will see the welcome return of Edward Carnby, the first hero of 3D adventuring and star of some of the most technically advanced and downright scary games of their time. Precursor to such recent gems

as *Nocturne* and the *Resident Evil* series, the original *Alone In The Dark* game pushed the boundaries of 3D gaming, bringing together rich cinematic quality with hard-as-nails puzzles and quests.

Deep in their Parisian hovel its creators Darkworks are now in the final stages of development. Pretty much sealed off from the world, they are beaver away, adding this and

that, taking out bugs, drinking coffee and smoking their way through hundreds of cigarettes in an attempt to recreate the dank creepy interiors that they've successfully built into the game. As this recent batch of screenshots show, *Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare* promises to be every bit as engrossing as its predecessors and far more frightening to boot. We're afraid. Very, very afraid.

MAILBOX



Flight sims are dead (gasp), *Diablo 2* causes comedy online, and the patch debate continues in its usual snory fashion

★ ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

CONTACT INFO

Write to us, and if your letter is selected as Letter Of The Month we'll send you a prize.

WRITE TO Mailbox, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info.

SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON

For the next few issues of PC ZONE, we will be giving away a Microsoft IntelliMouse to everyone who gets a letter printed in Mailbox. These digital rodents are perfect for 3D shooters and games that require a quick and precise response from your pointing device – you can even use them with Windows 98 if you really want to.

So get your writing skates on and send us your literary masterpieces. We promise not to be rude when we reply to them. Well, not very.



HELP IS AT HAND

Mr Bisp is not the first (and sadly not the last) person to complain about the negative attitude experienced in a lot of online games, especially first-person shooters.

However, he (and others) might like to know that in many online games, concerned gamers have set up organisations to help new players learn the ropes, to try to persuade llamas and lamers that ruining other people's fun is no way to behave and most of all to have fun.

For instance, TFC has an organisation called TPF – Team Play First (<http://www.teampf.org>) and Tribes has TOP – Team-Oriented Player (<http://www.altus.net/top>). These aren't clans, although many clan members have joined (membership of TPF is currently over the 1,000 mark and rising), including members from some of the top clans. However, these organisations are anything but elitist and actively seek out and welcome new members.

TPF provides training sessions for new players, master classes for particular maps or player classes and runs a list of TPF-approved servers (some in the UK).

All players like Mr Bisp have to do is contact them for an online experience worlds away from what they are used to.

Perhaps a mention in the Online section of your excellent magazine ;-) would help those among your readers, like Mr Bisp, who would love to play online, but get put off by the seemingly limitless numbers of 13-year-old American brats intent on 'Own1ng' them.

David McGuire
(aka Amorphia -TPF-)

★ Sound advice indeed, and extra help can always be found in the many chat forums and message boards in existence for big titles. There is a large games community out there willing to help people new to the Net, although inevitably you will still bump into the occasional chimp in these places intent on causing trouble for everyone. Top tip: ignore them.

DIABOLIC

It is always a disappointment when a company you trust fails you, and I, along with countless others have been unfortunate enough to suffer the terrible state of play on Blizzard's Battlenet. Until purchasing *Diablo II* I would have defended Blizzard as being one of the most reliable developers I have ever purchased from, but their dealing with their jewel Battlenet has just been poor.

At the moment the *DII* forums are in turmoil, two camps have formed, those who will defend Blizzard to the hilt, and those who want to sue Blizzard for everything it's got. Blizzard set up realms in *DII* to prevent the hacking that occurred in the original. In realms, data is stored on hosted servers. The servers couldn't cope. Blizzard

looked in the face of the statistics of pre-orders (1.5 million) and of the problems seen in its online test (100,000 people) and still released the game with servers that couldn't hope to hold. This is the problem that led to the creation of the two sides. That and the problems of lag, not being able to connect even when servers were 'up' and frequent connection interrupts that interfere with virtually every game. Flames and counter-flames dominate the forums, fuelled by the fact that servers were down for three or four days for what was termed as simple maintenance and bug-fixing.

that it has dismissed its consumers as people who do not need to be informed. On the Monday after the servers had been down so long for their 'maintenance', Blizzard was declaring how happy it was with the commercial success of *Diablo II*. This is probably the exact opposite of the feelings held by a vast number of their punters, who feel as if it has performed another beta test.

Andrew Tickner

★ We are aware of the problems people are having playing *Diablo II* online. This is a shame, as the game itself is much better online than in single-player by all

“Two camps have formed, those who will defend Blizzard to the hilt, and those who want to sue them for everything”

ANDREW TICKNER, ON BLIZZARD'S BATTLENET SERVICE

My vision of Blizzard, however, was not so much tarnished by that, rather it was tarnished more by the way that Blizzard literally cut itself off from its consumers; it only communicates through infrequent updates on the realms (which basically just say: up, down, or still down). This is totally unsatisfactory, I am yet to see a post by a Blizzard employee in its own *DII* forums, even when people are complaining on every forum, since Blizzard didn't give us any forums to even report bugs on, let alone complain. I have seen this before, and it doesn't help the situation if nobody can be bothered to take a few minutes and at least say what is going on regularly.

I probably will purchase games by Blizzard in the future, and I probably will enjoy them, but it has lost respect from thousands of gamers, mostly for the fact

accounts. The mind boggles as to the logic behind providing a paltry three servers to cope with the amount of people who have bought the game. Look out for a full review in next month's Online section, by which time Blizzard will hopefully have pulled its fingers out and increased the server count, and maybe even decreased downtime. Watch this space.

PATCHES (AGAIN)

As a 33-year-old gamer (*Sensible World of Soccer* – what a game!) and one of the first PlayStation owners I would like to tell you the story of two games. PlayStation Scenario
Step 1: Save up hard-earned salary, pension, pocket money (delete as appropriate) for long enough to afford game.
Step 2: Buy game (always mail-order, don't be a mug



B-17FF may rejuvenate the flight sim genre on its arrival.

and pay the high-street price).

Step 3: Come home, announce purchase to eight-year-old son.

Step 4: Put game in PlayStation – play for hours.

Step 5: Stop playing in sulk because even with son playing as Costa Rica, England still don't win any matches.

PC Scenario

Step 1: Save up hard-earned salary, pension, pocket money (delete as appropriate) for long enough to afford game.

Step 2: Buy game (always mail-order, don't be a mug and pay the high-street price).

Step 3: Come home, announce purchase to eight-year-old son.

Step 4: Put game in PC.

Step 5: Game won't load, freezes, doesn't run (delete as appropriate).

Step 6: Is it DirectX, drivers, hidden files, set-up, etc, etc?

Step 7: Speak to helpline (generally very helpful – especially Take 2).

Step 8: Surf Web for necessary upgrade – find it... marvellous).

Step 9: Download.

Step 10: Download crashes after 2Mb... great!

Step 11: Download again – it works!!

Step 12: Patch game – download won't self extract – why?!

Step 13: Silly old me, it's a hidden file in my Windows temp directory... of course!

Step 14: Finally sort out game – call son.

Step 15: Discover two or

three days have passed, son at school, in bed, not interested (delete as appropriate).

Please don't think this is one of those boring PlayStation v PC letters. I love my PC, *Half-Life* is one of the best games ever, *Civ II* takes some beating and *AOE* online is just fantastic. However, what is going on with these patches, is it just me that thinks they are out of control?

I am presently still trying to experience the phenomena that is *HL* online, but I discover that the latest version 1.0.1.1 something. 0.6.4 etc is over 25Mb big – you try downloading that successfully or without it taking half the day! Please tell me that *PC ZONE* is putting this on the cover CD before I lose even more of my already thinning crown!

Ben

★ Such is the price we pay to play the best games on any platform. Patches will be less of a problem when high-speed Internet access is the norm and big downloads are no longer a scary proposition. The *Half-Life* patch you are seeking is on this month's cover CD, and as always we will endeavour to include all large patches for big games on our CD as soon as we possibly can.

FLY AWAY

In last month's edition of *PC ZONE* you picked up on the fact that flight sims today are a dying breed soon to meet the dot-matrix printer and punch cards in virtual

heaven. For years, flight sims have been the staple diet for PC gamers, with developers bringing out sequel after sequel (the mighty Microsoft *Flight Sim* series to mention one).

But in recent years the sequels are beginning to look a bit samey with little to separate *MS Flight Sim 99* from 2000, they have hit a brick wall in development: a brick wall with a big sign hanging from it saying 'REALISM'.

Years were spent with geeky spods calculating the maximum ceiling of a cessna skyline, or some such thing, then coding it in. So now all flight sims are the same because they are virtually real. There is no reason for people to buy a new flight sim when the last one was just the same, and publishers have difficulty attracting a new market because beginners are scared stiff with all the 'accurate physics models' and nine million page handbooks and four separate manuals (one for each featured plane).

So I am afraid I will have to disagree with Mr Shoemaker and say flight sims have died a death. Give it a year and they'll still be dead.

Ben Kaye

★ Flight simulations are not as popular as they once were but there is life in the genre yet. *B-17 2 Flying Fortress* is on the way and Microsoft's *Flight Sim* series is still as popular as it ever was. However, with fewer publishers creating flight sims, it looks set to become even more of a specialist genre than it already was. Not dead then, just a little peaky.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Having just read the introduction to this month's magazine (Sep 2000), I am wondering whether large amounts of the gaming community, including myself, are about to be isolated by the growing demand for online gaming. Chris refers to the fact that he can see "high-speed digital online access literally just around the corner". Now don't get me wrong, I am all for this.

I don't want to stand in the way of the gaming industry fully utilising the technology that it is available to it, but I feel that this introduction of high-speed access may segment the gaming audience into two – those who can afford it and those that can't.

I myself have spent many a happy hour playing multiplayer *Quake* across my S6.6K modem with pings in the region of 130. But those days have gone, and with games such as *Half-Life* the only pings that I can now achieve are in the 300s. Naturally, this makes it impossible to compete with the high-ping players. However, with the new technology such as ADSL this type of ping should be long forgotten, but for how many of us? I myself, being a student, cannot afford the £40 monthly subscription charge being asked by many companies for this access. I fear that because of this new technology, the industry will begin to purely aim for the multiplayer side of games and this is already evident in games such as *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III*, and how many of us can get decent pings in those games with a S6.6K modem?

All I am saying to developers is don't forget the single players out there who can't afford the latest connection speeds even though we would love to have it. Produce the quality games such as *Unreal Tournament* which do focus on the multiplayer aspects, but also remember there are those of us that can't join the world online just yet.

Rob Blake

★ There are many games you can play online without high-speed access (unfortunately, first-person shooters don't fall into this category). Regardless, there are so many excellent single-player games in existence and on the way that you will have no problem finding first-class PC gaming entertainment while you wait for high-speed access costs to come down.

ROMERO'S SHOES

As much as I like your brilliant magazine, I find myself at odds with your views on *Daikatana*.

Put yourselves in John Romero's shoes. He leaves a profit-making company, starts his own firm, and all he gets is people who have no idea how to make a computer game telling their readers his work is not fit for the bin.

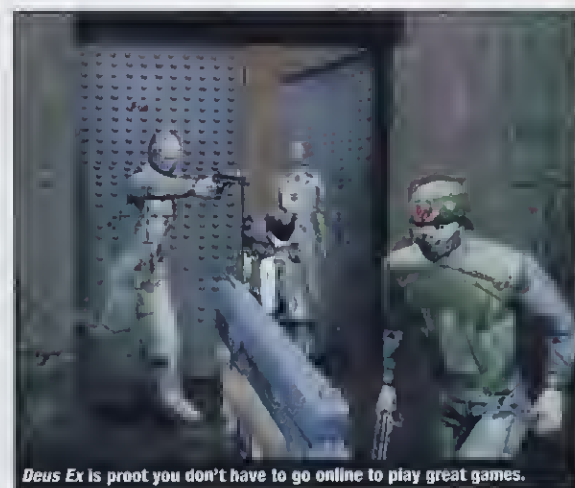
Try producing a magazine with half of your staff. As I have never tried to make a game, I cannot criticise John's Romero's work as being crap. I agree, however, that the graphics are bad.

As this letter goes against your views, it will probably not get printed.

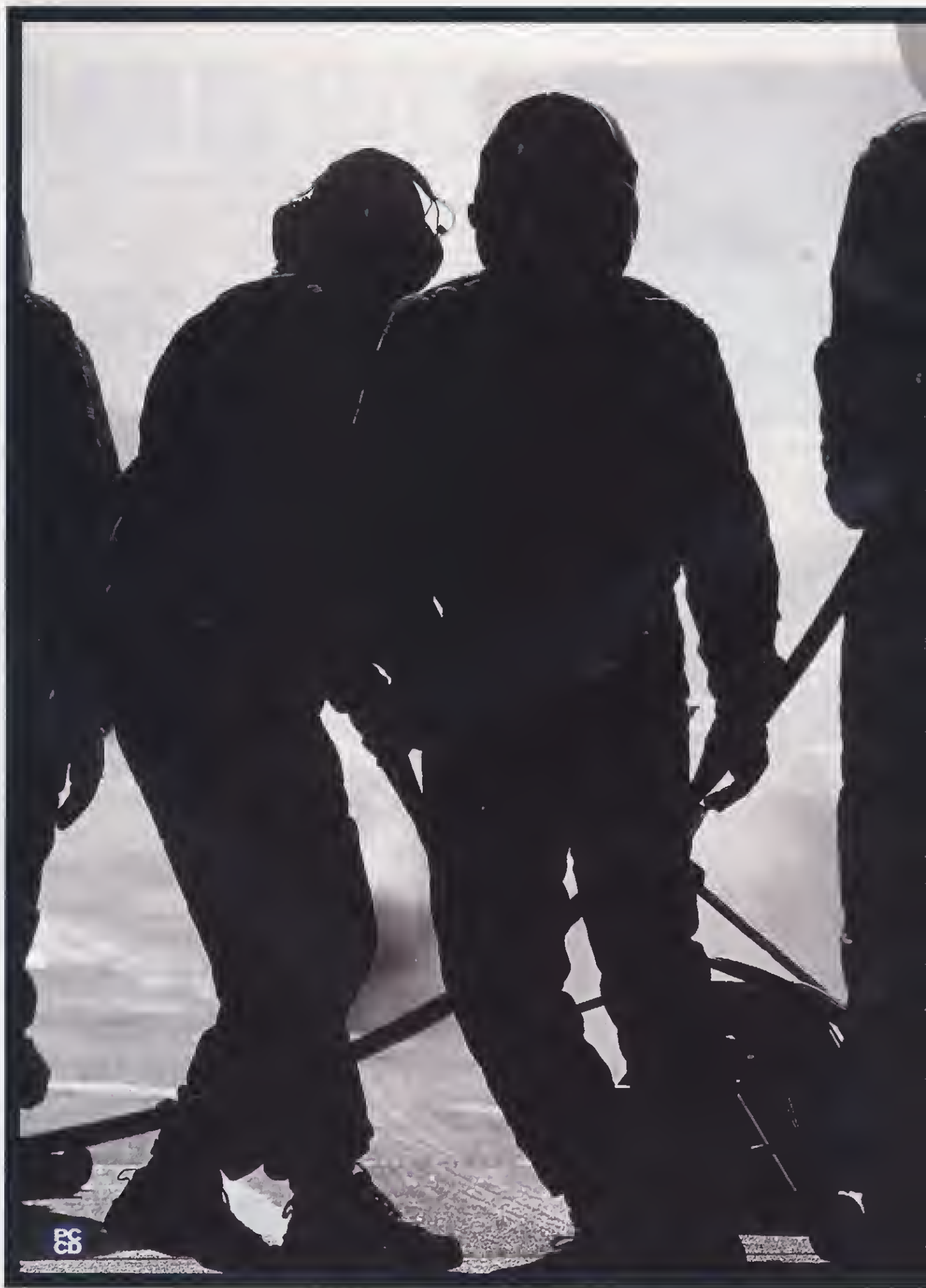
Alan Place

★ If Romero expects people to shell out good money for his game then it had better be good. As it stands, *Daikatana* is painfully average in terms of gameplay and downright ugly in the graphics department. We make no apology for reporting this fact to our readers who may otherwise have spent money on a substandard shooter.

Romero: try harder. [X]



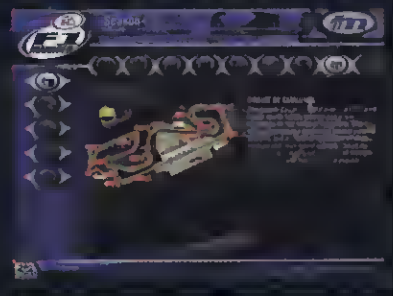
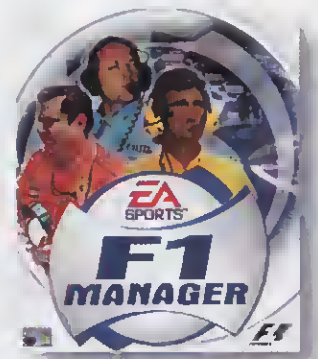
Deus Ex is proof you don't have to go online to play great games.



PC
CB



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it's in the game.™

"Curiouser and curiouser" said Alice...

AMERICAN MCGEE'S ALICE

The poor girl has never looked so angry. We sent *Keith Pullin* to Wonderland to find the source of Alice's anguish

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Rogue Entertainment
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
WEBSITE <http://alice.ea.com/>
OUT November 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Uses the *Quake III* engine
- Imaginatively warped take on the original Alice philosophy
- Original puzzles
- Gameplay tailored to suit all levels
- Stunning characters

There's definitely something weird going on. American McGee is not your typical game designer. He hasn't got a beard for a start. He's even got short hair. He tends to look at you when he speaks and not mumble into a coke can. Some might even consider him good-looking. Truly, this is all very strange, yet none of it is as weird as the game he's currently showing us.

American McGee's Alice is no children's story. As reported in

Doom, *Doom II*, *Quake* and *Quake II*, and feeling that it was all just the same stuff. You know - space marine versus space alien on a space station using space weapons. I definitely wanted to get away from the classic machine gun, rocket launcher, grenade launcher kind of thing - it just seemed a little tired."

McGee continues: "I had a couple of thoughts about games where players could walk up and down ceilings and walls, and then this popped into my head."

she's got to face - pain and suffering and so forth. She's got to save Wonderland and save herself from the trauma that she's suffered."

This is not a game full of singing oysters. In short, this is the closest anyone has ever come to the original philosophy behind Lewis Carroll's books. So, prepare yourself for a very disturbing experience, and as American says: "This is definitely one for the adults."

TEENAGE KICKS

The ultimate goal of Alice's quest in Wonderland is to find out why she has become this kind of psychologically screwed up teenager. Assisting you for most of your journey through Wonderland is the Cheshire Cat. He naturally assumes the role of your guide in much the same way that Navi did for Link in *Zelda* on the N64. Unfortunately, trusting everything he says is going to lead you into hot water. So, another part of your on-going mind-bending predicament involves assessing whether the information he gives you is even slightly helpful.

Other characters are easier to work out - they usually just try to kill you. Yet instead of just chopping off your head for the sheer hell of it, there have very profound reasons. McGee again emphasises the psychological storyline: "Each one of the boss characters represents one of the major emotions she is fighting against, or fighting to resolve. For example, the Hatter is anger, the Jabberwocky is fear and the Queen is sadness. She is essentially

"Alice is fighting for her own psychological redemption. The characters represent different bits of her emotions that haven't been dealt with"

PCZ #92, this adaptation takes place after the original two Lewis Carroll books and stars a rather paranoid, almost psychotic Alice who begins the game insanely rocking back and forth inside a loony bin. Wonderland has been transformed into a dark twisted version of its former self, thus mirroring Alice's own state of mind, and nothing - absolutely nothing - is as it should be.

So, the original story was never an on-going fascination from childhood?

"As a child I read the fiction a few times, but I've never considered a version before now. Since I was, say, six or seven years old I've never really thought about it. I actually made a point of not watching the Disney version until very recently."

Thank God for that. Nothing against Disney's happy-go-lucky singalong cartoon, but what we have here is far more interesting. Experiencing this *Alice* is a veritable third-person perspective trip through anguish and despair. As McGee explains: "Essentially what Alice is doing is fighting for her own psychological redemption. All the characters represent different bits of her emotions that still haven't been dealt with and the locations actually map out the different fears in her mind that

WHY ALICE?

The question is: why has a man previously involved in the creation of fairly straightforward first-person perspective shooters such as *Doom* and *Quake* branched into something so different?

McGee himself offers the answer: "The idea of doing *Alice In Wonderland* came out of my frustration of having done

There are many characters you won't recognise.

CV

ROGUE
ENTERTAINMENT

ROGUE ENTERTAINMENT

This small, Dallas-based developer's only two previous offerings have both been mods. It's now working closely with American McGee to make its first full game, *Alice*.

1997 *Quake* pack: *Dissolution of Eternity*

1998 *Quake II* add-on: *Ground Zero*



The White Rabbit and the Cheshire Cat smile for the camera.



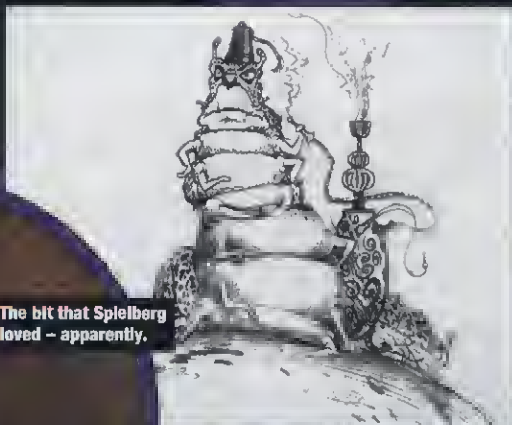
Treat your pussy kindly and it might help you out. Then again, maybe not.



Alice and her gang stand ready for action.



An early sketch gives some idea of the level detail.



The bit that Spielberg loved – apparently.

The characters all look suitably twisted.

breaking down emotional barriers in her mind."

On screen, the bosses are absolutely massive. They tower above Alice and show all the devilish malice you'd expect from what are basically Alice's worst nightmares. Even the more insignificant creatures in the game carry an aura of deadly mischief about them. What's more, the denizens of Wonderland know how to gang up and attack en masse. Groups of enemies will contain leaders who will co-ordinate assaults. Apparently the AI routines were inspired by a game called *FAKK2* that did fairly well in America but has yet to be released here.

When released, *Alice* will feature more than 30 different characters, including Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee, the March Hare, plus characters that McGee and

Rogue Entertainment have concocted themselves.

MARKET APPEAL

With such a well-known brand and characters at their disposal, American and Rogue are aiming for a mass-market appeal as opposed to a hardcore-gamer audience. There will be plenty of control aids for the novice gamer, including an auto-jump feature when Alice is close to a drop, as well as arrows that point her in the right direction. More experienced third-person adventurers can forego the stabilisers and dive straight in. But make no mistake about it, even though the *Quake III* engine is at the heart of the game, the large majority of *Alice* has come straight from the *Super Mario Bros* school of platform survival.

There is plenty of blasting action, but *Alice* is primarily

intended for those who want to think – this is a brain game in every sense. "All our puzzles are going to be environmental puzzles and jump-based puzzles," says American.

Essentially, this means that the banal 'correct key for the correct door' puzzle routine is not what the game is all about. Subtlety is the key: if you walk onto a giant-sized chess set, you become a piece and have to work your way across to the other side of the board without being taken. In fact, the closest you'll get to unlocking a door, is talking to a door.

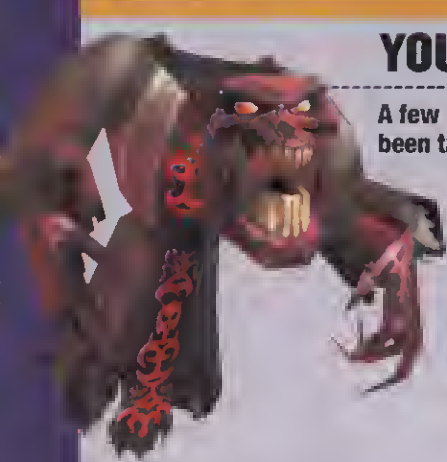
The platform-jumping puzzle situations are more your standard

fare, but with floors likely to trail off into swirling, fractal nothingness for no apparent reason, there's scant relief from the game's overriding warped sadism. The end gameplay breakdown is set at 70 per cent action and 30 per cent puzzle, so there's, erm, plenty of shooting to be done.

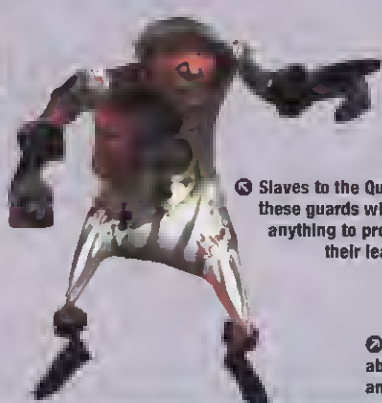
The dozen or so weapons Alice finds on her adventure are varied and spectacular. There's an Ice Wand that freezes and shatters creatures, and there's something called a Jack (in the box) Bomb that shoots out and explodes. Alice also owns some lethal playing cards that can be flicked out like flying razors so that they cut, slash, slice and dice her enemies. The version of the game we were being shown was quite graphic, with rivers of blood spouting profusely from wounds. So, was this one element of *Quake III* that would remain?

YOU DON'T LOOK TOO WELL...

A few of the deranged characters that have not been treated kindly by Wonderland...



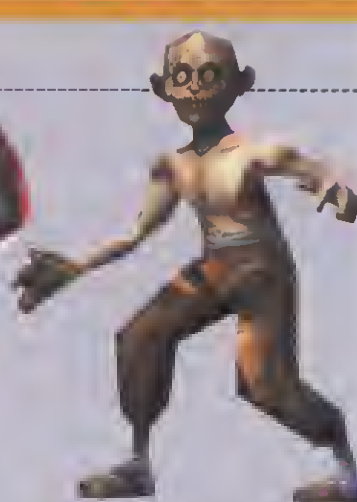
These sad spirits are the remains of souls that have been exorcised from their original body by the Queen.



Slaves to the Queen, these guards will do anything to protect their leader.



These guys aren't too bothered about attacking at first, but if you annoy them – watch out.



These lonely creatures follow Alice around while whining and gurgling pathetically.

"Haver mind. Have a go on this darling."

"The denizens of Wonderland attack en masse... Groups of enemies will contain leaders who will coordinate assaults"

"Er, actually they've gone a little crazy with this part," states a bemused McGee. "They've just got the blood in there. It's a little bit over the top but we are going to try and have comic gore, nothing too gratuitous because it really doesn't serve the story very well."

SECOND THAT EMOTION

Another of the games that McGee cites as an inspiration for *Alice* is Valve's *Half-Life*. He explains why: "In the story we're trying to evoke emotions in the player. *Half-Life* had twists like that where you feel an emotion rather than just killing stuff. We want you to feel anger, remorse or guilt if you don't do the right thing."

One way in which McGee and co are hoping to capture players' emotions is by including plenty of cut-scenes with a decent script. One scene showing Alice running away

from a giant boulder as it follows her down a tunnel was even shown to Steven Spielberg who allegedly lapped it up, saying it was like watching Indy in a skirt.

Another more interesting way to evoke player emotion has been achieved by continually changing Alice's appearance. Most of the time Alice will look pretty pissed off, but that will change depending on what's happening around her. Sometimes the miserable cow even cheers up a bit, although generally speaking her spiralling descent into total madness becomes more and more etched into her features as the game goes on.

There is the odd occasion when she'll actually change into something entirely different altogether. We won't say anymore than that because it will spoil the effect, but rest assured it's something other than a chess piece.

Q&A

AMERICAN MCGEE



The eponymous creator of Alice talks openly about how he got started, what life was really like at id and loads more stuff besides...

PCZ Interesting name... What's the story there?

AMERICAN Yeah, well, um... My mom smoked pot. [laughs] No. That's real – actually she did, and that's probably where it came from. She was going to call me Obnard, so I'm pretty glad she called me American really.

PCZ Where did you grow up?

AMERICAN Dallas, Texas. I was born and raised there. I was actually born in a house with no floor. Stayed my entire life there apart from two years between the ages of six and eight when I was in Mexico. Oh, and a bit in Los Angeles.

PCZ What was the first game you ever bought?

AMERICAN Hmmm... I remember what the first game I ever stole was – *Pacman* for the Atari. Actually, the first time I ever got thrown in jail was for stealing a modem for my Commodore 64. But I guess the *Pacman* cartridge was the first game I ever walked out of a store with...

PCZ How did you get into making games as opposed to stealing them?

AMERICAN That was just a massive stroke of luck. I moved in next door to John Carmack [creator of *Doom*] in an apartment block. I was working on cars at the time, strip-repairing Volkswagens for a living. He and I became friends, he offered me a job and the rest is history.

PCZ So what id games did you first work on?

AMERICAN *Doom*. I didn't actually do any design work for it, but I did a lot of testing and it was when I was trying to cut my teeth on learning level design. Back then my time was split between answering the phones on tech support and testing the games.

Eventually I did a *Doom* map that was turned into a *Doom II* map and I ended up doing quite a lot of maps for *Doom II*. I also did a bit of coding – mostly utility things. Then, when we got into *Quake*, John and I spent a couple of months together working on the editor and getting the engine up and running. Then over the course of that project I got involved with a lot of cool stuff: full-on programming, putting on sound effects, managing the music and, of course, making maps. That was all really fun... It was a good time.

PCZ So what was it like working on *Quake II*, one of the most eagerly anticipated games of all time?

AMERICAN For me, *Quake II* was more of the same, though I was punished for doing too many things. I was told that my job was doing maps and nothing else. Eventually they asked me to do some more sound

effects, so I said that I'd only do it if they didn't punish me for it. John said to my face that he wouldn't, then one day he turned around and said, "What are you doing? You're supposed to be working on maps!"

id was a weird place to work at that time. It was very political and difficult to be happy there after four-and-a-half years.

PCZ At what point did you think, "This is it – I've had enough"?

AMERICAN I knew in the third year that things weren't right. I was really unhappy then, and knew it was time to move, but it was difficult because id were paying me ridiculous amounts of money. It was hard to walk away and say, "Screw you!"

PCZ Did you have *Alice* in your mind when you did eventually walk away?

AMERICAN I had the seeds of what became *Alice* in my mind when I walked away, but *Alice* didn't actually fully form until I moved out here [California]. I'd been here for six months or so and I was driving along in the car one day and "whomph!" it just came into my head: here's a character that can do all kinds of crazy stuff and no one can question why she's doing it. If she wants to walk on the ceilings – go for it. It's *Wonderland*. The characters she's fighting against are just as whacked. They're fully drug-induced.

PCZ So, you wanted something completely psychedelic and surreal?

AMERICAN Oh yeah. And it's all there.

PCZ What's the best game you've ever played?

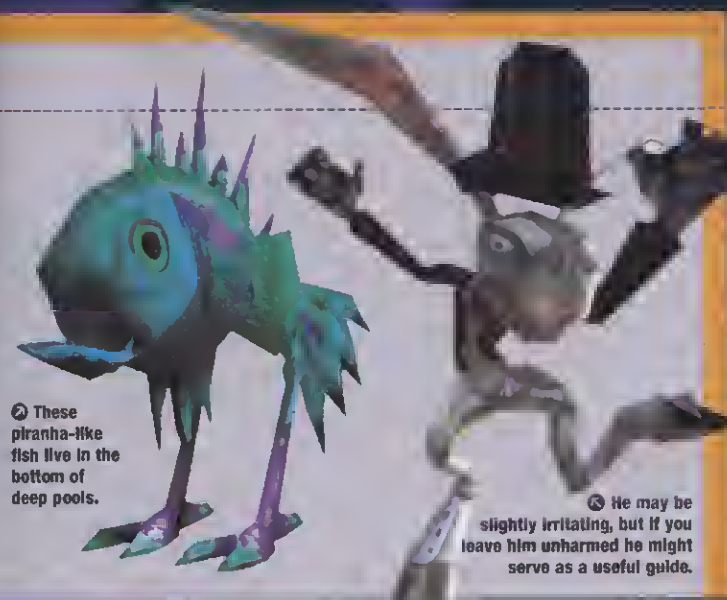
AMERICAN My all-time favourite game is *Ridge Racer* for the PlayStation. I'm very much into simple games. I think that games should be like toys, in that the fun that comes out of it is something you don't really expect. That was the cleanest, simplest and purest game I've ever played.

PCZ Have you ever had a fight?

What happened?

AMERICAN Yeah. I was going to a middle school called Hood, and it was actually full of hoodlums. I'd see things on a daily basis like kids being stabbed in the head with pencils, I saw a girl get her eye poked out with a halpin – really bad stuff. The teachers used to come into school two hours early, lock their cars in a compound, hide in the classroom and then wait for the kids – it was like a warzone.

Anyway, my mom got me out of there and sent me to a posh new school in seventh grade. It was my first day and this huge kid came up to me and said, "What's your problem?" and pushed me. I was freaked. He smacked me in the side of the head and that was all I remember. When I came to I found out that I'd actually broken his collarbone and broken his nose. I'd apparently beaten the s--- out of him and then passed out. That's about it... Although last weekend some guy sat on the hood of my car and me and a friend were about to kick his ass, but we realised he was way to drunk to beat up so we just drove off.



Ⓐ These piranha-like fish live in the bottom of deep pools.

Ⓑ He may be slightly irritating, but if you leave him unharmed he might serve as a useful guide.

➔ To further enhance Alice's character she will sporadically talk to herself and to the player, encouraging you to feel as though you are an inherent part of what is going on in Wonderland. American does not want the player to perceive themselves as a disembodied hand leading an angry teenager home...

THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

The inclusion of the *Quake III* engine automatically conjures up images of a manic multiplayer game with Mad Hatters, White Rabbits, Queens and Alices coming out of your ears. Surprisingly, this is not the case. *Alice* will be a

single-player journey only. So, please explain yourself, Mr McGee...

"When you focus on multiplayer and single player at the same time, you take away from one or the other, or both. A game like *Quake III* or *Unreal Tournament* is going to be able to provide a better multiplayer experience than we're able to do, so we're going to stick to single player."

At least he's honest about it. How many developers would be willing to simply tag on a multiplayer option at the last minute to the detriment of proper game testing and bug fixing? Quite a few, we'd wager.

All things considered, there is no doubt that *Alice* is one of the most original game designs we've seen for a long time. But is McGee worried that he is effectively messing about with a classic children's fairytale? With his involvement in the *Doom* games, will some people see *Alice* as an irresponsible aberration?

"I was worried about that in the beginning. I was concerned about taking it and kind of subverting it. I'm concerned about violence in games and whether or not people are going to perceive this as some kind of bastardisation of the fiction."

"So far there has been little negative response. Literally one

person has written an email to me with an article that was negative. Personally, I feel that this is actually a truer version of *Alice In Wonderland* than Disney ever created."

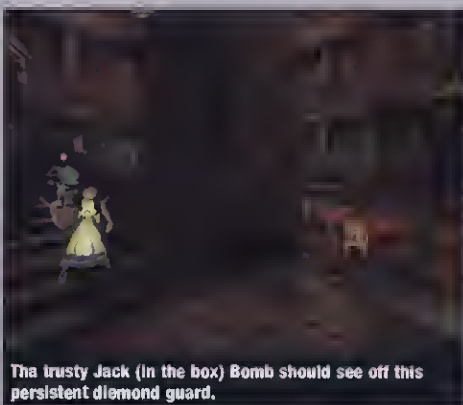
As far as we're concerned there really is no argument there. What remains to be seen is whether the warped ideas and the game-play can blend together. If so, we are looking at what could be one of the most enthralling games of all time. On the other hand, could *Alice* be just too psychedelic for its own good? We will let you know as soon as the review code enters our own little Wonderland this November. **EW**

THE WONDER OF WONDERLAND

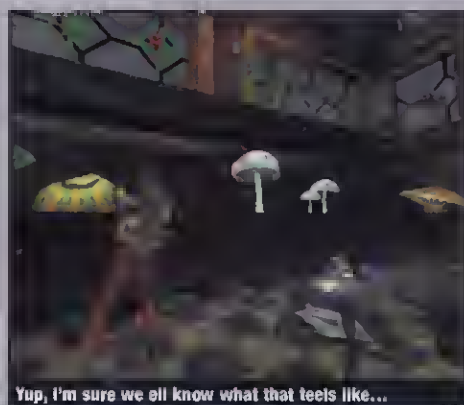
Sit back, relax and allow us to take you on a quick tour of some of the strange and surreal sights Wonderland has to offer...



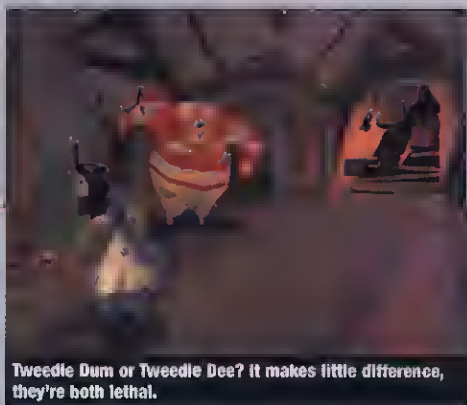
Alice avoids the guards in the Fortress Of Doors.



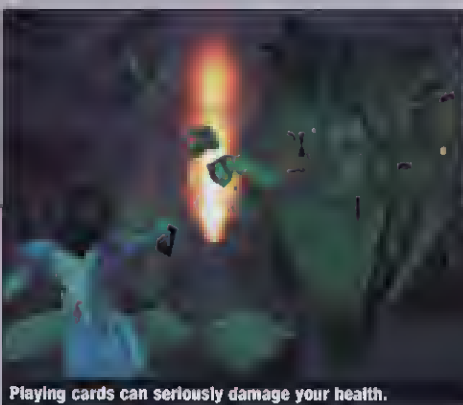
The trusty Jack (in the box) Bomb should see off this persistent diamond guard.



Yup, I'm sure we all know what that feels like...



Tweedle Dum or Tweedle Dee? It makes little difference, they're both lethal.



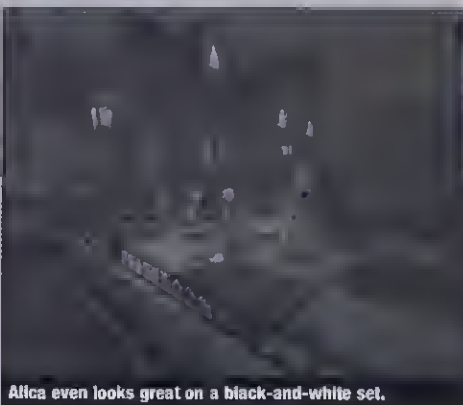
Playing cards can seriously damage your health.



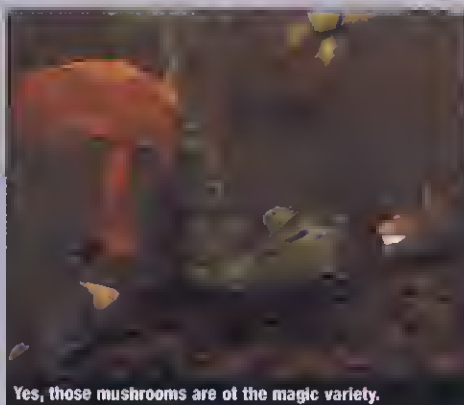
"Chase ma big boy."



"Go on - just a quick sniff."



Alice even looks great on a black-and-white set.



Yes, those mushrooms are of the magic variety.

Forget Croft.
Bring on Alice.



Somebody doubts
Alice's icing abilities.



Alice, or Theresa from *EastEnders*?

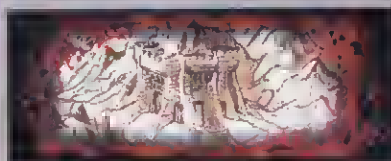
A giant playing card is
about to take a giant fall.



“If the ideas and
gameplay blend
together, we’re
looking at what
could be one of the
most enthralling
games of all time”

A DISEASED LAND...

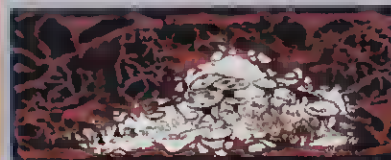
Each of the five areas in Wonderland contains three levels. Here's a quick taster of what you can expect in each...



THE VALE OF TEARS

The playground of Alice's youth is dying. The first area contains a decaying city called Pandemonium

and the Fortress Of Doors, which is a maze-like area where Alice has to talk to doorknobs to find her way through. Once beyond the doors Alice shrinks to the size of an acid tab and has to make her way through a seemingly idyllic forest to the Pool Of Tears.



MUSHROOM FOREST

In the Forest Of Shrooms Alice gets to try out some of the local hallucinogens. Things get even trippier in the Caterpillar

Garden as Alice attempts to avoid the smoke from the Caterpillar's hookah. The final level, called the Centipede's Lair, sees our tripped-out heroine battle against an evil centipede for a giant mushroom.



MAD HATTER'S AREA

Plotting her way through the Chess Village leads to the Psychedelic Funhouse that resonates with incessant mad

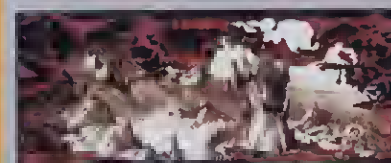
laughter. Here Alice must contend with a hall of mirrors and seven years' bad luck. If Alice's luck doesn't completely desert her she'll arrive at the Mad Hatter's Castle just in time for dinner...



LAND OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

This is the area where the platform puzzles hot up. Alice will need her hopping skills to avoid the flames in the Volcano

Village Incline. After that the Fire Knps should be avoided at all costs in the Citadel Of Fire. When Alice finally reaches The Lair Of The Jabberwocky she must kill it to enter the final area of the game.



QUEEN'S DOMAIN

This is a nightmare labyrinth. Ultimately Alice enters the Queen's Keep where she must face the final test and vanquish her fears once and for all.

It's time to hit the campaign trail again with...

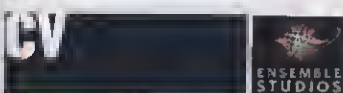
AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE CONQUERORS

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Ensemble Studios
PUBLISHER Microsoft
WEBSITE www.microsoft.com/games/conquerors
OUT September 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ New civilisations, units, technologies and map styles
- ★ Four new single-player campaigns
- ★ New game types
- ★ Improvements to *Age Of Kings*'s gameplay



ENSEMBLE STUDIOS

It's no surprise that this crew is headed up by Bruce Shelley, one of the masterminds behind *Civilization*. The team got together to create *Age Of Empires* and it's kept them busy ever since...

1997 *Age Of Empires* – The real-time strategy game that single-handedly moved Microsoft's games division into the big league.

1998 *Age Of Empires: The Rise Of Rome Expansion* – Not so much an add-on as a complete overhaul. This set the pace for expansion disks to come.

1999 *Age Of Empires II: The Age Of Kings* – Splendiferous sequel to the best-selling *Age of Empires*, even though it's more evolutionary than revolutionary.

The *Age Of Empires* series is becoming something of a trusty old dog. You've enjoyed its company for a few years now and you've grown comfortable with it. Not only does it look

just like all the other dogs in the neighbourhood (no fancy 3D shenanigans from this beast), it's also somewhat predictable, and the last thing you'd expect it to do is learn any new tricks. But let's face it, that's what gives this series its appeal. It might only sport a tired old three-quarter isometric view, but then again you don't have to readapt your old flight-sim keyboard claw just so you can move the game camera and give orders at the same time. And, unlike some young RTS upstarts I could mention, it still has a healthy dose of resource management, which, believe it or not, some players still enjoy.

On the evidence of the beta version we received, *The Conquerors* sticks firmly to that tried and trusted formula. It would be wrong though to assume that this expansion CD is just more *Age Of Kings* campaigns given a bit of spit and polish. As was the case with the *Rise Of Rome* expansion for the original *Age Of Empires*, Ensemble has packaged up a smorgasbord of enhancements and extras that will have seasoned fans salivating from the moment they read the box blurb.

EXPANSION

Laurence Scottford has always enjoyed a bit of world domination after tea. So he was more than happy to go out and play with some conquerors

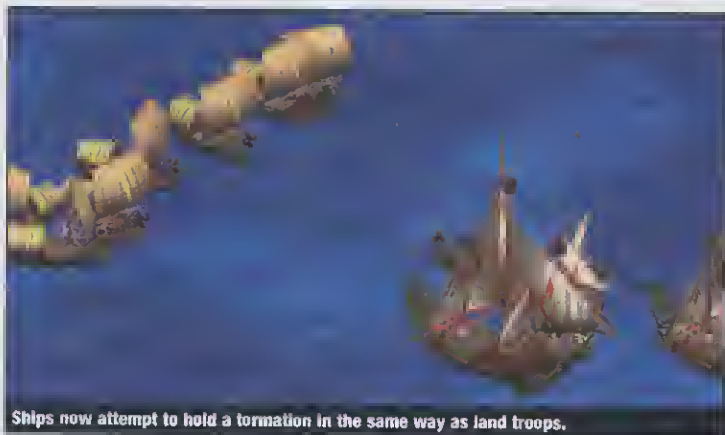
SO WHAT'S NEW?

The most obvious addition, as you'd expect, is a set of four single-player campaigns. While the *Age Of Kings* campaigns focused very much on the underdog (William Wallace, Joan of Arc, et al), *Conquerors* turns its attention to some of history's more successful bullies. So this time you get to play with the likes of Attila the Hun and El Cid. As before, the campaign

games are strung together with a series of vignettes outlining the story in a "Meanwhile, back at the farm..." kind of way. Unfortunately, the actors providing the voice-overs have once again all been hired from the Dick Van Dyke School of Crap Accents.

IN SEARCH OF NEW CIVILISATIONS

New campaign games are all well and good, but let's face it, they don't add



Ships now attempt to hold a formation in the same way as land troops.



The Aztecs are the new kids on the block – and very nice they look, too.

that much longevity. Fortunately, *Conquerors* adds some spice to the standard single and multiplayer games by sprinkling in a mix of new races, units and technologies.

One of *Age of Kings*'s strengths is that the civilisations are distinguished not just by different colour schemes and graphics, but also by the technologies and unit types available to them. This is also the case with the five additional civilisations (Aztecs,

unique experience, and you really do have to use your brain to take advantage of their strengths or overcome their weaknesses. Of the new civilisations, only the South American races are blessed with new graphics.

What's really going to breathe new life into your multiplayer games though, are the new game types. *King Of The Hill* places a monument at the centre of the map and has the players

“Ensemble has packaged up a smorgasbord of enhancements that will have seasoned fans salivating from the moment they read the box blurb”

Huns, Koreans, Mayans, and Spanish) that are included in *Conquerors*. Huns for example, on account of their being nomadic and preferring to sleep on their horses (or with them, depending on their personal preferences), do not have the ability to build houses. Instead they begin each game with a pre-set limit to their total population. The net result of these differences is that playing each civilisation is a

ranged round the outside. To win, all you have to do is capture the monument and hold it for 500 years. Simple? Well, not quite. The monument is always difficult to get to in the first place. It might, for example, be on an island in a large expanse of water. So first you have to figure the best way to get to it. Then defending it isn't quite as straightforward as it might at first



SNOW AND SUN

There are two new terrain types in *Conquerors* with their own idiosyncratic features

WINTER



In the snow-covered landscape, it's easy to track units from the footprints they leave behind...



The landscape also features large sheets of ice that you can walk on – but they won't support the weight of buildings.

TROPICAL



Tired of boring old sheep? In this landscape you herd turkeys!



Wolves are also replaced... by even deadlier jaguars!

appear either. That's largely because you are not permitted to build in the immediate vicinity of the monument, so you can't simply capture it and wall it off.

The other two new games seem to have been designed for those who love resource management and those who don't. *Wonder Race* does away with combat altogether, and has everybody living in peace and harmony. Well, almost. There's still something of a competitive spirit among neighbouring civilisations as they race to be the first to build a wonder and win the game. It's all about how quickly you can gather those resources and how well you spend them.

If you're an aficionado of big battles and the *Wonder Race* game sounds as if it will bore you to tears, then *Defend The Wonder* was made for you. In this game variation every civilisation begins in the Imperial Age, and all with a ton of resources to encourage rapid build up of forces. One player though, begins in a walled-off area with a wonder at the centre, and has to protect it for 500 years. Meanwhile, the other

players are doing their level best to get together some heavy siege machinery with which to break in and spoil the party. Because of the high-tech level everybody starts at and the lack of any need to research advanced weaponry, this game type makes for some truly spectacular battle sequences.

NEW AND IMPROVED

So, you can see that there are a lot of clearly visible additions packed into *Conquerors*. What is likely to really make a long-term difference to extending the life of *AOK* are the improvements that have been made

“What’s likely to make a long-term difference to extending the life of *AOK* are the improvements that have been made under the bonnet”

under the bonnet. There are 16 major areas of improvement over the gameplay and features in *AOK*.

Some of the improvements demonstrate Ensemble Studios' commitment to playing its own games to destruction and ironing out the wrinkles. For example, let's take the

situation in which you have grouped together infantry with a heavy weapons platform. How often have you watched in horror when, on first encountering an enemy group, your HWP stupidly joins in the action, wiping out half your own infantry with friendly fire. It's an AI oversight that many RTS designers are guilty of. In *Conquerors*, siege weapons like Mangonels will hold their fire if they are likely to injure your own troops.

Speaking of sieges, these become both more realistic and more complex. You can now garrison foot soldiers inside battering rams, which has the dual benefit of giving the ram

of idly standing around watching everybody else working, he'll set off and perform an action appropriate to that building. So, in *AOK* you might have set a villager to work chopping trees and subsequently had another villager building a Lumber Camp. Now you simply get the first villager to build the Lumber Camp near the tree line, safe in the knowledge that as soon as he's done he'll begin chopping away.

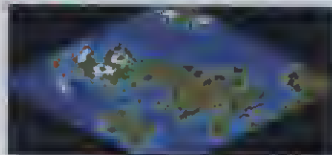
One major time-saver is that, once you have built a Mill, you can queue farms, so that any you already have will be automatically replanted, even if you are tending to a battle on the far side of the map.

As you can see then, *Conquerors* stretches the term “expansion” somewhat. The *Age Of Empires* series might be a bit of a trusty old dog, but it can still surprise you every now and then by getting itself over a few fences rather than just looking on pathetically at all the younger dogs on the other side. As to whether *AOE* will finally get itself onto the 3D bandwagon – well, I guess we're going to have to wait for *Empires III* to find that out. **PC**

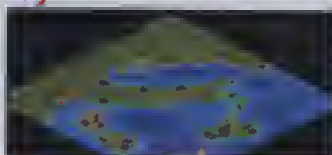
MAP HAPPY

A great addition to *Conquerors* are some maps based on real-world locations. Here they are in all their glory.

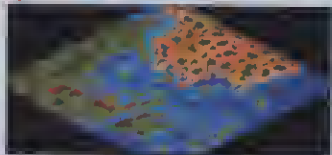
Britain



Italy



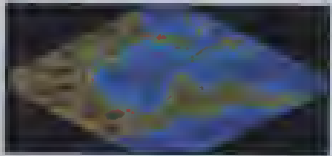
Byzantium



Mideast



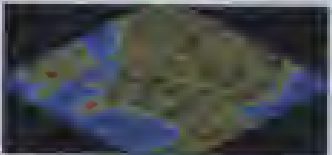
Central America



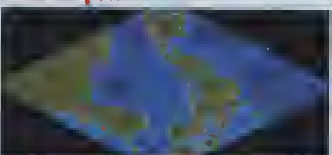
Norse Lands



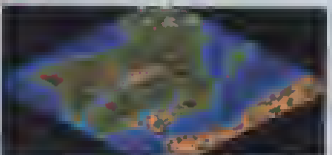
France



Sea of Japan



Iberia



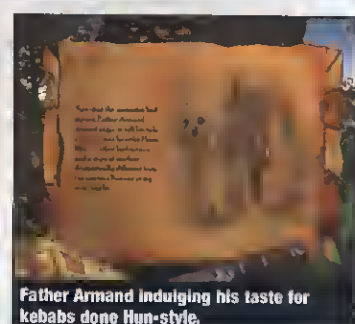
...and, erm, Texas!



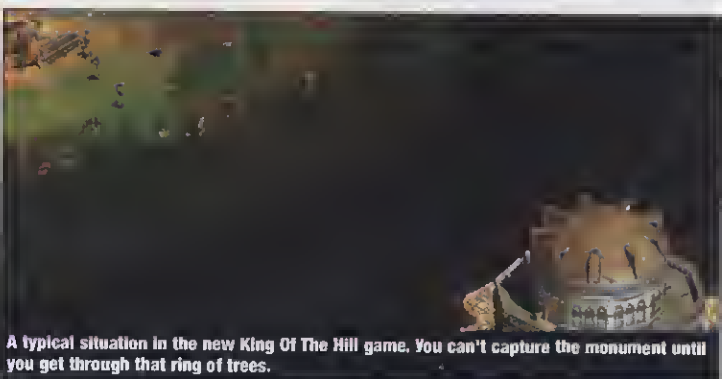
Defend The Wonder games make for some spectacular battle sequences.



There are four new campaigns to play through.



Father Armand indulging his taste for kebabs done Hun-style.



A typical situation in the new *King Of The Hill* game. You can't capture the monument until you get through that ring of trees.

NEW UNITS AHoy!

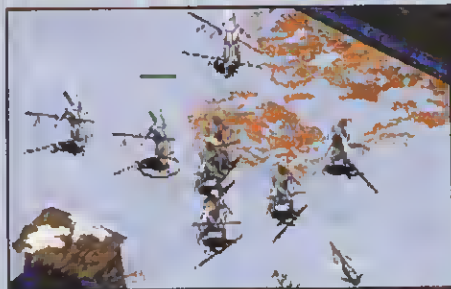
Conquerors comes with 11 new unit types neatly packaged up and itching to get their chance on the battlefield. But how well do they stack up against the existing team? Here's the low-down on each of them

CONQUISTADOR



A unit that is unique to the Spanish. As with other unique units, Conquistadors can be churned out en masse once you've built a castle. These guys are mounted on horseback, with rifles, and pack a real punch at close quarters. Don't mess with them.

EAGLE WARRIOR



Not only are these guys pretty fast on their feet, they also look quite cool with their eagle head-dresses. Their speed and ability to dodge through a hail of arrowfire makes them ideal skirmishers.

HALBERDIER



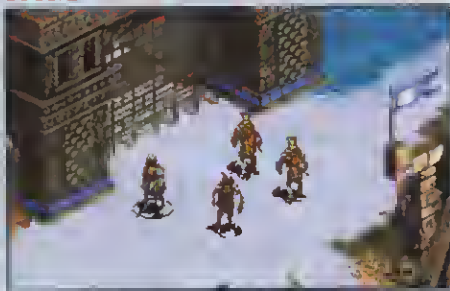
A sort of toughened-up Pikeman. These guys work well as second line defence against cavalry charges, especially once the enemy has broken through your perimeter.

HUSSAR



A more superior sort of cavalry. Not only are they better-dressed than the average horseman, but one or two of these among your regular cavalry can be used for taking down those pesky monks.

JAGUAR WARRIOR



The Aztecs' Jaguars (or 'Jag-wahs' if you're reading in the US) have to be the coolest-looking dudes in the game. They're covered from head to toe in jaguar skins and you'll be tempted to make lots just for the visual effect. Great at hand-to-hand combat.

MISSIONARY



A specialised Spanish monk. He's mounted so he can be a bit more nippy than your common or garden monk. The perfect thing when those conversions just can't wait.

PETARD



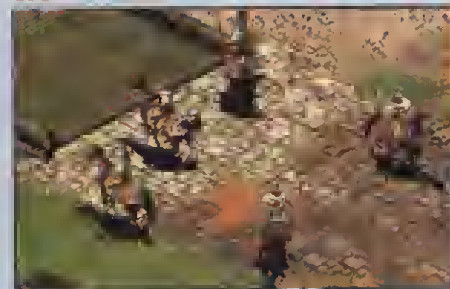
Suicidal nutters! Not only are these guys happy to lug around kegs of gunpowder, when they reach their target they gleefully strike a match and take everything in the neighbourhood with them.

PLUMED ARCHER



This Mayan unique unit, unlike the Britons' Longbowmen with their superior fire-power, is simply able to take a lot more punishment before going down.

TARKAN



The Huns' unique unit. These beered-up lads have something of a penchant for smashing stuff up, so they make excellent support troops for your siege weapons.

TURTLE SHIP



The only new ship in the game is unique to the Koreans. Although slow, it's heavily armored and will happily overturn fire and demolition ships in a sea battle.

WAR WAGON



Unique to the Koreans, this baby houses half a dozen archers and can be quickly manoeuvred into any fracas to spit arrows at all and sundry. A good cavalry charge will take it out though.

COMMAND

China h
Red S
the
men an

Load up with Lasers and other power weapons
and head off into space for a blast em' up
of galactic proportions....Bang - Gunship Elite
throws you into some of the most spectacular space
battles ever seen on a PC"

PC Gaming World



Russia contain China's expansion.
on commander you will be placed at
at vehicles. It is your duty to lead your

Set in 2015, **FORCE 2** is an exami-
nation into the conventional
Warfare. Like the U.S. Army's
same name, this real-time 3D
wargame applies the technolo-
boomring Information Age with
military hardware. As a Chi-
platoon commander, you will
split second decisions and
engagement for your
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- Redefining 3D space combat for the new millennium
- Fully immersive storyline across 19 missions with five different alien races
- Revolutionary rendering techniques and particle systems drench this game in special effects
- An awesome arsenal of weaponry ranging from the 'Plasma Cannon' to the devastating 'Titan's Hammer'
- Eight person multiplayer with IPX and TCP
- Full Internet support on Mplayer and MSN Internet Gaming Zone
- 1600*1200(GE256) Resolution supported for astounding realism



EVERYTHING ELSE IS A
WASTE OF SPACE



FIRST
ENCOUNTER

UNDYING

Keith Pullin steps into the screaming bowels of hell...

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER DreamWorks Interactive
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
WEBSITE <http://undying.ea.com>
OUT February 2001

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Plenty of Clive Barker influences
- ★ RPG gameplay elements
- ★ Smooth spell selection interface
- ★ Cool 'scrying' mode
- ★ Very scary creatures and effects

Clive Barker's appetite for horror is boundless. With more than a dozen novels and 13 films to his name, Britain's answer to Stephen King should be satisfied. But, hell no. The twisted mind behind fright-flicks such as *Hellraiser* and *Candyman* has teamed up with DreamWorks Interactive for what could be one of the best horror games ever to hit the PC.

Clive Barker's: *Undying* is the story of Patrick Galaway, a kind of mystical Indiana Jones who ventures to a

remote estate in Ireland in order to destroy a family of powerful immortals who are obsessed with creatures from other dimensions. As well as the estate, players get to explore a destroyed monastery, the cursed city of Oneiros, the Pirate's Cove, the Eternal Autumn and the Neolithic Caves.

Lead designer Dellekamp Siefert describes *Undying* as a "first-person perspective spellcaster". The rest of us can expect a first-person shooter with a fireball or two thrown in for good measure. So we've seen this kind of thing before with *Rage Of Mages* and

more traditional weapons include dynamite, Molotov cocktails, scythes, shotguns and more.

CHOOSE YOUR PATH

The great thing about *Undying* is you can choose which spells to focus on, giving the game that extra RPG appeal. For example, cautious players may be inclined to invest in Defensive Shield magic, whereas aggressive players are more likely to build up their Fireball or Mindshatter spells. It's a system that also bodes well for highly strategic multiplayer action,

in a real-time variable wind. Sound has also been cleverly used – a specific sound matrix has been created so that footsteps on grass, rock, wood etc all have unique characteristics. The same goes for the sound of a blade embedding itself in wood, stone, mud or flesh, of course. Different objects also react to certain surfaces. Bullets, for example, are more likely to ricochet off a stone wall than they are a wooden door.

Other highlights include superb enemy AI that features novel attributes such as creatures jumping in a pool of water when they're on fire. There are also plenty of stealth elements such as hiding in shadows and walking around noisy surfaces like twigs and gravel.

Clive Barker's: *Undying* really does promise to be a horror game of the highest calibre. Look out for the review some time after Christmas. **PC**

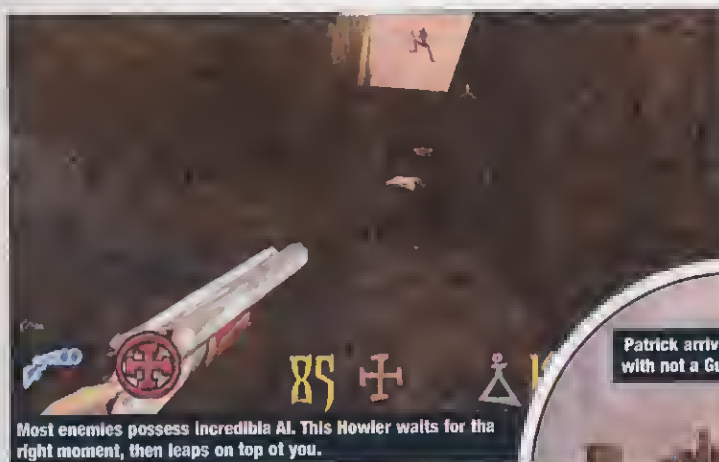
Undying contains more than 20 original creatures devised by Clive Barker.

"Aesthetically, Undying is faultless. There are creepy effects such as elongated shadows flitting across walls and cobwebs that flutter in a real-time variable wind"

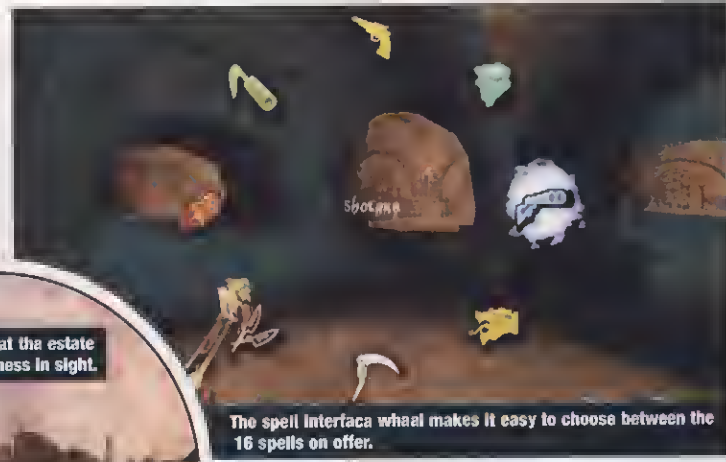
countless other wizard shoot 'em ups, but it has never been done on the scale of *Undying*. Here, there are 16 different spells available, all of which can be amplified up to five times. But spells aren't the only way to destroy the immortal troublemakers, and the

especially with a modified version of the *Unreal Tournament* engine under the hood.

Aesthetically, *Undying* is faultless. There are ultra-creepy effects such as elongated shadows flitting quickly across walls and cobwebs that flutter



Most enemies possess incredible AI. This Howler waits for the right moment, then leaps on top of you.



The spell interface whaa! makes it easy to choose between the 16 spells on offer.



Your talking skull spell can sniff out enemies and then go after them.



The 'scrye' spell lets you look into the past for clues...

4X4 EVOLUTION



How to overuse the lens flare effect, part one.

1 x 1 = 2. 2 x 2 = 4. 4 x 4 = 16. For **Dave Woods** this is accelerated evolution...

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Gathering Of Developers

PUBLISHER Take 2

WEBSITE www.4x4evolution.com

OUT September

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ✦ Freeform off-road racing
- ✦ Customisable vehicles
- ✦ Extensive online options against Mac and Dreamcast users

16 different courses with no walls or invisible limits. You basically plough your own furrow, so to speak. And, if you own a PC or Mac, you can download extra tracks and extra vehicles to parade in front of the spotty Dreamcast brats who have to make do with what they're given in the box.

Win a race and you get cash. You can use the cash to upgrade your vehicle with add-ons like heavy-duty off-road suspension, brush guards, performance exhaust and special off-road racing tyres. It all sounds very rugged, doesn't it? Unfortunately though, due to the fact that all the trucks are licensed, the game won't feature physical damage, which takes a bit of the macho sheen off the proceedings. We've never quite worked out why this is a stipulation for these licences. Are the manufacturers trying to make us believe that their trucks are

"If you own a PC you can download extra vehicles to parade in front of the spotty Dreamcast brats who have to make do with what's in the box"

invincible in real life? We're not all from the Deep South you know.

The big question is whether it's actually going to work as it's intended. There's a serious lack of decent racing games on the PC that you can play online, and as this is the first that's promising cross-platform play, we're going to keep our fingers crossed and pray. We should be able to uncross them next month when we'll have the full review and demo for you. **[E2]**

Not another off-road game we groaned," when a preview of *4x4 Evolution* was spotted in the Gathering Of Developer's paddock at the recent E3 games show. And at first glance you'd be forgiven for thinking the same. But there's a twist.

Going for a simultaneous launch on PC, Mac and Dreamcast, *4x4's* boast is that it's going to be the first game that allows you to play head-to-head with up to eight players regardless of the platform they're running the game on. If there's any better reason to purchase a game than the opportunity to show spectated designers and console boys who the real gamers are, we'd like to know what it is.

The pedigree of the developers also points to the fact that *4x4* might be more than an also-ran. Terminal Reality has previously been responsible for other driving notables such as the *Monster Truck Madness* games (not exactly refined, but still fun to play) and the more serious *CART Precision Racing* (which went down a storm).

4x4 is sticking to an arcade model, and there are 50 trucks on offer and



Real life doesn't look this good. Not where we live anyhow.



A game that's going to be popular with sloanes across the globe.



Now remember, no overtaking.



A hot dusty road somewhere in America.

Play Dreamcast and Mac boys on the Internet. A hilarious prospect.



It's no looker but the gameplay is unique.



You'd better run before the farmer comes back.



Fisticuffs and gunfights. All in one game.



Stealth is going to play a major part in the game.



Interact with your surroundings, including this horse.



See if you can find the rusty sheriff's badge.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

DESPERADOES: THE SHADOW OF EL DIABLO

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Spellbound

PUBLISHER Infogrames

WEBSITE www.infogrames.co.uk

DUT Q1 2001

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's *Commandos* in the Wild West
- Six different characters to control
- Advanced AI
- Interact with almost everything you see on screen

There aren't many games set in the Wild West, which is a bit strange when you think about the ready-made stereotypes and the rich heritage of celluloid that could be mercilessly ripped off in the name of PC gaming originality. Still, *Desperadoes* has appeared on the horizon and it could be the game to redress the balance.

Described as a real-time adventure strategy game, it manages to cram in more spaghetti than Leone, with colts

Dave Woods travels back to the days when a man had to do what a man had to do and computer games hadn't even been invented. Oh, the horror

and other classic weapons, dynamite and powder keg detonations, Mexican bandits, ghost towns, knife throwing and even a bit of old-fashioned prostitution for good measure.

As we all know, the West was won with a single, silent hero, so we think the developers are being a bit generous by providing six for you to juggle in the game. First-off comes John Cooper, the main man and crack shot. Then there's Sam, the ex-slave who's a dab hand with sticks of dynamite, the self-explanatory Doc McCoy and Kate O'Hara, who is described as a "charming poker player". Of course, no Western would be complete without a token hard Mexican, and *Desperadoes* provides rotten teeth in the mouth of Ingio Sanchez. The familiar list of usual suspects is finished with a curious addition, Mia Jung, who is,


apparently, a diminutive Oriental with a pet monkey. Handy if you get stuck in a prison cell, with a sleeping guard, a set of keys and, etc, etc.

Set during the American civil war, your job is to find El Diablo, the leader of a gang of Mexican handits, and the chase is spread across 24

missions and a diverse range of inside and outside locations. Along the way you'll come up against 25 different opponents, and each of these has a different profile and AI characteristics based around criteria such as intelligence, courage, sense of duty, marksmanship and even resistance to alcohol. After all, why fight when you

can just get guards pissed instead? It's always worked for us. You'll also be able to interact with most of the things you see on screen, including horses, explosives and enemy installations. One of the missions we've seen running revolves around a man about to be wrongly

“Desperadoes crams in more spaghetti than Leone, with Mexican bandits, ghost towns, knife throwing and even a bit of prostitution thrown in for good measure”

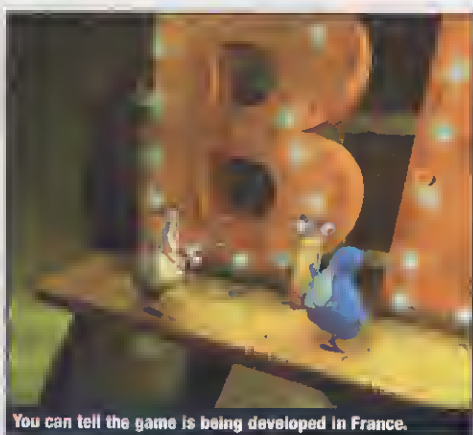
executed. The townsfolk are out in their Sunday best for the spectacle, so you've got to figure out a way to distract them before cutting the rope and making a dash for freedom. The game's scheduled for a first-quarter release next year and as always we'll keep you right up to date with any major developments. 



Look, explosions and everything.



You've got to admit, it looks bloody gorgeous.



You can tell the game is being developed in France.



Now that looks like a puzzle.



Dinner is served.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

STUPID INVADERS

An adventure game about really stupid, ugly creatures.
What better person to introduce it than **Dave Woods**?

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Xilam
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft
WEBSITE www.ubisoft.co.uk
DUT September

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ④ It's a point-and-click adventure game
- ④ It looks a bit like *Day Of The Tentacle*
- ④ Vocals from TV's *Futurama*
- ④ Great cartoon graphics

There's not a day goes by without one of the **ZONE** boys shedding a tear for the old-fashioned point-and-click adventure game and the good old days of LucasArts in general. Look in the Top 100 and you'll find that this one company used to dominate the genre with classics such as *Grim*, *Pandango*, *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*. If you haven't

played all of these then they're still worth checking out – unlike other genres, adventure games age well and can be described as timeless classics.

Still, things are looking up somewhat. Later in the year we're going to be treated to another instalment in the *Monkey Island* series and we're hoping for a big return to form after the disappointing third episode. But that's not all. French development house Xilam is also hoping to ride on the retro wave with its first PC title, *Stupid Invaders*.

As you can see, the graphics look superb in a real-life cartoony sort of way (if that makes any sense whatsoever)

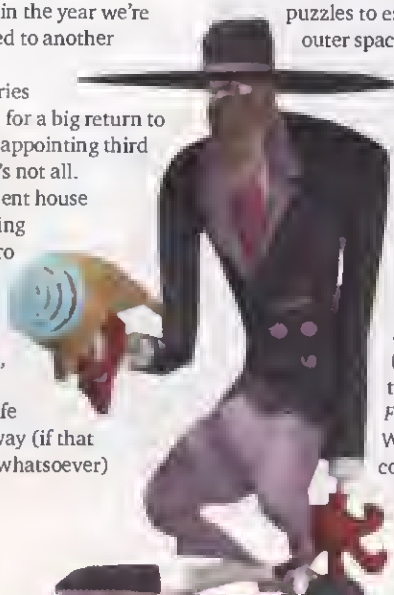
and are reminiscent of *Day Of The Tentacle*. As far as the story goes, it's your basic aliens crash-land on Earth, are chased by a mad scientist and have to solve various weird puzzles to escape back into outer space sort of gig.

Other basic facts you might be interested in: 120 locations, 50 interactive characters to meet and converse with, and the promise of witty dialogue and one liners (using the vocal talents of TV's *Futurama* series). We're still not completely

convinced by the latter. You see, the game itself wasn't a product of the developer's imagination. Apparently

“It's your basic aliens crash-land on earth, are chased by a mad scientist and have to solve various puzzles to get back to outer space sort of gig”

it was based on an obscure animated series called *Space Goofs*. With a title like this, and in-game characters with side-splitting names like Bolok, we're not sure how the sledgehammer French humour will translate into English. But with our penchant for adventure games we're willing to give it a go. You can expect to see our verdict in the next couple of months. **[M]**



Ⓢ A new point-and-click adventure – at last.

DEEP FIGHTER

DIVE INTO THE ACTION.....

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IN THE ULTIMATE UNDERWATER SHOOTER.**

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- LIVING AND BREATHING ENVIRONMENTS THAT REACT AND EVOLVE AROUND YOU.
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DEVELOPED BY



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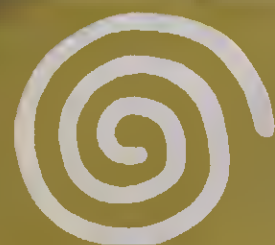
128 BIT, E-MAIL & FREE* INTERNET ACCESS

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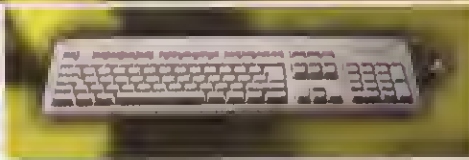
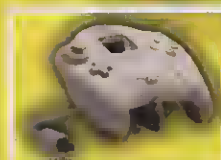
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PCZONE REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the **ZONE** reviews first – we'll tell you which games you've got to buy and which games to avoid

THE PC ZONE GAMES SYSTEM

This is the machine we use to review new titles on. Our reviewers also use older machines to get an impression of gaming in the 'real' world, but this is what we currently consider the best value-for-money set up. As games become more demanding, the specs will change to reflect that

At the heart of the machine is a 600MHz AMD Athlon processor. These babies are seriously scorching, optimised for 3D applications, so first-person shooters fly like you wouldn't believe. Faster Athlons are now available, but at the present prices, this is probably the best value for money. The system bus runs at a godlike speed, so the whole thing is like a supercar with no brake pedal.

Supporting the processor is a MaxiGamer Xentor 32 from Guillemot, purveyors of all things graphicy. Based on the TNT2 chipset, these RAM-packed beasts are designed to cope with the polygons, textures and special effects that those game developers insist on chucking at the screen. Guillemot has a new GeForce 256-based card in the offing, which we're hoping to upgrade to soon.

Pionex has supplied the cases and 128Mb of PC100 memory for the motherboard. For gaming, especially with RAM prices as they are at the time of writing, 128Mb is the optimum amount. The cases have room for expansion without taking up excessive space. Nifty floppy slot too...

Hard drive services are provided by the stunning 7,200rpm, 20Gb Maxtor DiamondMax Plus (from the 5120 family

of drives). It's large and fast with room for full installs and quick to load games when you want to play them.

Sound services are supplied by VideoLogic. The SonicVortex 2 card is a PCI device featuring Aureal A3D 2.0, ideal for gamers. The latest drivers are stunning, using the card's own chip to reduce the processing overhead on the CPU when calculating 3D audio. Aureal's API now handles not only sounds themselves, but also their reflections: as you approach a doorway, you can hear sounds from the room reflected into the corridor. Immersive stuff.

VideoLogic also supplies speakers from the superb Sirocco range. We primarily use Crosstires for gaming – they may seem expensive, but you get twice the quality you pay for. Four satellite speakers and a humungous subwoofer give pinpoint accuracy for 3D audio and bass meaty enough for the rumblest explosions. We also use other speakers from the range (the original Sirocco and new Sirocco Pro) for sound card testing.

Guillemot's DVD Theater setup provides not only the ability to load games quickly, but also to watch DVD movies (essential for reviewing games – not) with its bundled MPEG decoder card.

Peripherals are supplied by Microsoft, from USB mice (top-notch for first-person shooters) to the full force-feedback monty – joysticks and driving wheels – and the ubiquitous SideWinder gamepads.

Last but not least, are headphones from Philips (when the others in the office are suffering from Sirocco overkill) and fabulous 17in Brilliance monitors (107Bs). If you're used to cheap monitors typically bundled with new PCs, the crispness and stability of the image on these comes as quite a shock.

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at **ZONE** pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our reviewers are the most experienced and talented in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre, and won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we have our Feedback section on page 96. This is where you get the opportunity to put your point of view into **PC ZONE**.



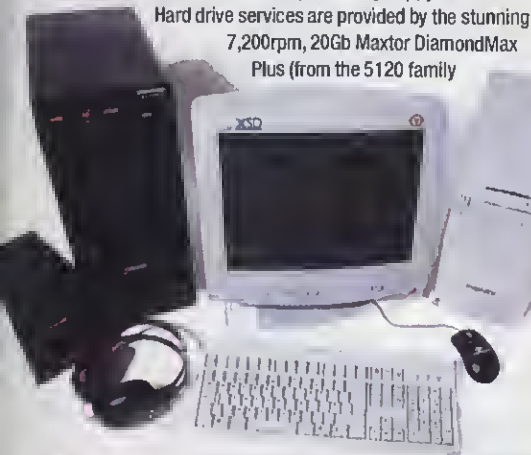
CHECK THE SPECS!

The standard spec machine these days is a P233 with 32Mb of memory – but before a game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the tech specs on packaging can be a little optimistic, make sure you check out the We Say bit in our tech specs box. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. It a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call:

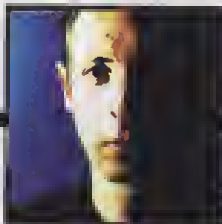
Acclaim 020 7344 5000 • Activision 01895 456700 • Anco 01322 292513 • Blue Byte (Germany) 49 0 208 450880 • Codemasters 01926 814132 • Cryo 01926 315552 • Eidos Interactive 020 8636 3000 • Electronic Arts 01932 450000 • Empire Interactive 020 8343 7337 • Europress 01625 855000 • Gremlin Interactive 0114 263 9900 • GT Interactive 020 8222 9700 • Hasbro Interactive 020 8569 1234 • Infogrames 0161 827 8000 • Interplay 020 7551 4222 • Microids (France) 00 33 146 01 54 01 • Microsoft 0345 002 000 • Mattel 01444 246333 • NovaLogic 020 7405 1777 • Rage Software 0151 237 2200 • Take 2 Interactive 01753 854 444 • THQ 01483 767656 • Ubi Soft 020 8944 9000 • Zabrac 01626 332233



MEET THE TEAM

All **PC ZONE**'s reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a fan of the genre

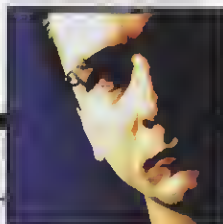
If you could assimilate someone, who would it be and why?



CHRIS ANDERSON

GENRE RPG, adventure, strategy
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Counter-Strike* and *EverQuest*

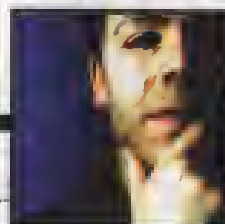
Silania Twain. I love that voice (and other things).



DAVE WOODS

GENRE FPS, RPG, arcade
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Counter-Strike* and *Deus Ex*

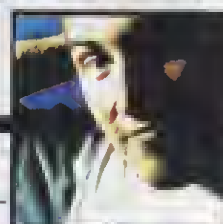
Jo Guest. Because she's extremely intelligent and a great after-dinner speaker.



RICHIE SHDEMAKER

GENRE RTS, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Sudden Strike* Beta and *Counter-Strike*

The wife I suppose.



MARK HILL

GENRE Adventure, RPG, turn-based
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Counter-Strike* and *Deus Ex*

The Queen Mother, because she's half-way there already.

HALCYON DAYS

★ **REVIEWS EDITOR** Dave Woods



After taking part in this month's Supertest and devoting all my waking time to furious sessions of *Counter-Strike*, I've come to an alarming conclusion - there's never been a better time to own a PC. Cool, huh?

The Internet has spawned a brand new set of bedroom designers, similar to the Matthew Smith-type heroes of yesteryear. (He developed the sublime *Manic Miner* if case you're wondering.) New mods are appearing on a daily basis, and for free, as long as you've got the Internet connection to handle the download.

But that's not all. Existing commercial titles are being improved and extended as well. The free *Nox Quest* (which we'll be reviewing next issue) and the imminent *Soldier Of Fortune Gold* are both excellent examples of how you can keep a game alive without having to spend a penny extra.

And it's a good job really, because we're now in the middle of a summer slump. Even if you've got the money there's not a great deal to buy this month. And, if you turn the pages towards the end of this month's Review section you'll come across some of the more scurrilous titles we've ever had the misfortune to play. It's not all bad news, though. *Voyager* is the first scrap of proof that the *Quake III* engine is going to be powering some of the best single-player shooters over the next year, and *Grand Prix 3*, although not the ground-breaking title we were hoping for is still the best F1 game you can buy. Now, do you mind? I can't spend all day talking to you lot. There's a *Counter-Strike* server up and running, and several bombs to be planted.

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

90-100% Here at **ZONE** we score every game out of 100. If a game receives the impressive score of 90 or above, it is awarded the **PC ZONE Classic** award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not really a fan of the genre.



80-89% Games that score 80-89 get the **PC ZONE Award For Excellence**. These are excellent examples of their type of game and if you're a fan of the genre you should definitely consider buying the title.



70-79% Any games scoring between 70-79 have just missed an **Award For Excellence**, but don't ignore them. The score is well above average and that means you're getting a great title that's worth the investment if you're a fan of the genre.

50-69% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-49% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre, or if you happen to see them at a reduced price.

0-19% Games that score less than 20 should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged, then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.



REVIEWS CONTENTS

58 STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

A single-player *Quake III*-driven game. At last, Raven provides the solution to multiplayer blues.

64 GRAND PRIX 3

The lights are off. Go! Go! Go!

68 RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS

Shoot more zombies in the head.

70 SYDNEY 2000

Have you got the fastest fingers in town?

73 A/I WARS

Hack yourself stupid without getting arrested.

74 CARMAGEDDON TDR 2000

It's here. Finally. But is it any good?

77 FOOTBALL MANAGER 2000

It's *Championship Manager*, but not as we know it.

79 FA PREMIER LEAGUE STARS 2001

Another brand new footy game from EA.

80 REVIEW SHORTS

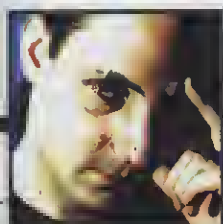
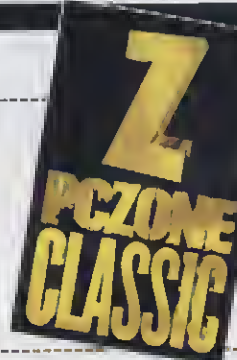
Infestation, *Heroes Of Might And Magic III*, *Flintstones Bedrock Bowling*, *Midnight Racing*, *Arcatera*, *Might And Magic VIII*, *Business Tycoon*, *Bang! Gunship Elite*

IT'S A TOUGH CALL...

Under the **ZONE** scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights, and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. There are now very few titles that can justifiably be described

as **PC ZONE Classics**. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all **ZONE Classics** are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+ per cent. These games receive the **PC**

ZONE Award For Excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them. When we say a game is a Classic, we mean it!



MARTIN KORDA

GENRE Strategy, space combat
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Counter-Strike* and *Shogun: Total War*

The Borg. Let's see how those baldy mechanised freaks like it.



PAUL MALLINSON

GENRE Action, RPG, turn-based
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Deus Ex*

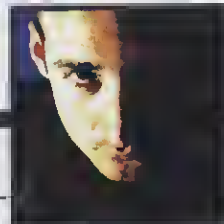
Henry Rollins. So that I can enact a *Duke Nukem*-style vengence mission on all the bad people in the world.



PAUL PRESLEY

GENRE FPS, action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Rogue Spear*

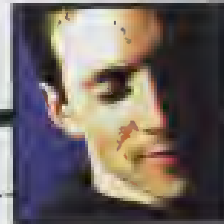
A mix of the girl from the Doritos ad and Yasmine Bleeth. Sorry, I thought you said inseminate. Ho ho ho.



KEITH PULLIN

GENRE Adventure/ RTS
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Ground Control*

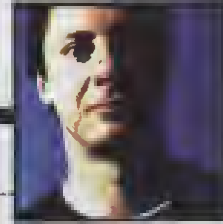
Bill Clinton and Tony Blair so t hat I could find out all of the world's secrets.



JAMES LYON

GENRE Action/adventure
CURRENTLY PLAYING *Baldur's Gate*

Steps. Well, I'd try to stick a couple of pieces of metal in them. And probably not through the mouth.



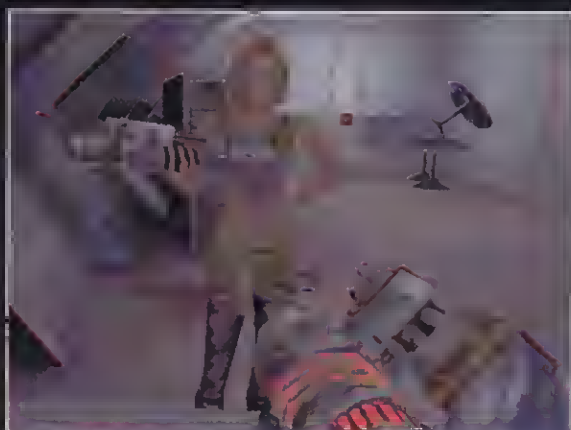
STEVE HILL

GENRE Football, racing
CURRENTLY PLAYING *CM Season 00/01 Beta* and *EverQuest*

This is the worst question yet.

STAR TREK VOYAGER: ELITE FORCE

★ £34.99 • Activision • Out now



Check out the shooter on that.



This is one game where your team mates actually play a useful role.



Elite Force features everyone's favourite bad guys.

**PCZONE
AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE**

It seems strange that the most popular genre in computer games is also the most scarce. While real-time strategies and role-playing games propagate at an enormous rate, the release of a first-person shooter is a rare event, celebrated by naked old men dancing in the moonlight somewhere in the Midlands. Since *Half-Life* stormed onto the scene like a remarkably intelligent stormy thing a couple of years ago, we've only seen the likes of *Kingpin*, *Allens Vs Predator*, *Soldier Of Fortune* and Mr Romero's fiasco among a few others come and go. Is it because they take too long to develop? Are the costs prohibitive? Or did Valve's masterpiece simply scare them all off? Of course, I'm deliberately leaving out the recent fragfests of *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament*, because they (together with the sublime *Half-Life* mod *Counter-Strike*) are going down a different route altogether, providing guns and a place to shoot them for all of us with a mindless compulsion for fragging. But even if everybody had free unmetered access to completely enjoy this communal activity, they could never replace the old single-player

of yore, the one with a story, a role to get into and a reason for the carnage. Even when I'm playing *Counter-Strike*, there's a part of me that thinks: why am I bombing these unremarkable-looking crates, what political beliefs am I shooting out of that terrorist's head, and who are these bloody scientists anyway? The thought never lasts very long, but there is a real sense of empty meaninglessness every time you railgun someone from a hovering platform just to see them reappear further away. *Quake III* is a marvellously entertaining game, but it almost stopped the narrative progression that was leading games towards something resembling an art form dead in its tracks. Thank the gaming gods (or in this case Warren Spector) for *Deus Ex*.

A GOOD IDEA

So, what happens when you take *Quake III* and stick a story on it? Well, if you're Raven and have just procured a juicy *Star Trek* licence, *Elite Force* happens. Working closely with id Software and under the watchful eye of

Paramount, Raven had to follow up its successful gore-soaked *Soldier Of Fortune* with a game where people used wimpy phasers and never ever bled. And while the result isn't a revolutionary *Half-Life* beater, it is an excellent game that shows it has more than suspect shock tactics up their blood-stained sleeve.

The story is a typical *Star Trek* plot, with the added advantage that you don't have to watch Paris and B'Elanna snogging, although you do get to see Captain Janeway making hard decisions her crew don't agree with and Neelix pottering around his kitchen like a maggot in a doll house. After *Voyager* responds to a distress call (distress seems to be a big thing in space) it gets





The game has its fair share of foxy cyberbabes. Not in this shot, though.



Meet the team.



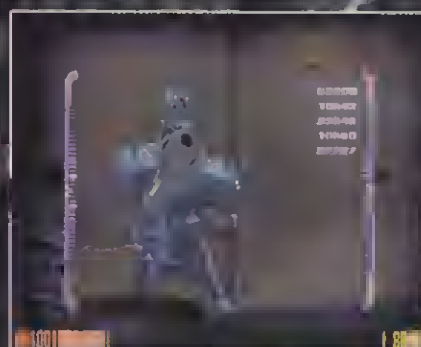
Killing aliens presents no moral dilemmas. Hurrah!



think he might well be dead.



At least the weapons make pretty colours.



Is that a gun in your pocket or... oh it's a gun.

caught in a giant shipyard, unable to escape and facing almost certain doom (wasn't there a *Next Gen* episode that began just like that?). The other stranded ships, which include a scavenger vessel full of completely misplaced Klingons and a Borg cube, hold the key to getting out and it's your job as the second in command of the newly formed Hazard Team to beam over and shoot at things.

The Hazard Team is an ingenious invention: essentially the *Star Trek* SWAT team, it's made up of people trained to kill aliens without being racked by guilt and having to wimpishly consult spirit guides for solace.

HAPHAZARD TEAM

By far the most interesting thing in *Elite Force* is the introduction of this Hazard Team, a mix of the

security guards in *Half-Life* and the officers in *SWAT 3* with more than a touch of *Starship Troopers* bravado, this lot is much more independent than any of these. Your team mates follow you at all times, but as soon as a combat situation arises they're diving for cover, taking up the best firing position available and moving around in a vaguely intelligent manner. They're like the bots in *Quake III*, but with a sense of preservation and greater conversational skills. The moment *Voyager* turns from being just another shooter with a great engine is when you discover that the redshirts can do more than follow you around like poodles. Not long after the first training mission, the doors to a hangar bay open and you're caught up in the middle of a massive firefight, with both invading aliens and Federation officers ducking behind crates, taking careful aim and retreating when injured. Most of the great moments in the game involve a massive battle with people fighting beside you rather than the usual blazing down a corridor in lone-wolf mode.

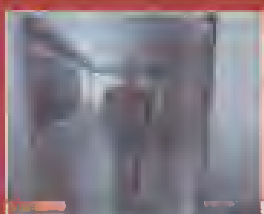
I mentioned their independence earlier, which can be a source of frustration as much as admiration. You can 'use'

people in the same way that you could in *Half-Life*, but all that does is provoke a response of the "What do you want?" and "Not now, Alex, can't you see I'm busy?" variety, rather than moving them to do anything useful. The game never requires you to issue orders. Everything is straightforward enough for the team to go along with or one of the many scripted events takes over. But you can't help feeling it could have been much better if

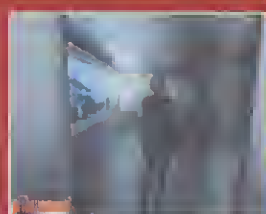
brainless scraps with ever-increasing monsters. The *Doom* homage that started in *KISS Psycho Circus* is continued in many of the levels here, with droves of flying creatures spawning out of generators in one of the early missions, and *Voyager* itself being assaulted by thousands of critters later in the game. It's a case of AI being substituted by numbers. Not that Raven has a particularly stunning track record when it comes to

ALEX OR ALEXANDRIA?

At the start of the game you get to choose whether to be a man or a woman, with no painful operations or steroid treatments necessary. There's probably some obscure psychological reason why I chose to play as the girl. Perhaps I'm secure enough in my own masculinity while also being in touch with my feminine side. Or maybe I just feel more comfortable in a bra, wearing a blonde wig and bright red lipstick. As far as we can tell, the differences are purely aesthetic, each one having different voices and skins, but it's nice to have the choice.



Do you play as the butch Alex...



...or the sultry Alexandria?

“Most of the great moments involve a massive battle with people fighting beside you rather than blazing down a corridor”

there had been a *SWAT 3*-style command system, especially since you're meant to be leading many of the away missions.

BRUTE FORCE

The intelligence of your team mates often has its shine taken off it by the poor enemy AI. You don't really have the chance to show off your gaming IQ when all you need to do is stand in a corridor phaserling wave upon wave of aliens. That's one of the disappointments with *Elite Force*: for every good shoot-out with humanoid enemies there are five

endowing its creations with intelligence. *Soldier Of Fortune* just did away with the whole problem by giving you a superb sniper rifle and extremely explodable heads. The Borg, as well as being one of the best species in the whole *Star Trek* universe, are the perfect enemy for this kind of AI. They are relentless killing machines that appear out of thin air in a green shimmer of transporter light and they keep coming at you until one of you is dead. A perfect example of Raven's failings in this area is when you come across The

WALKTHROUGH

VOYAGER VOYEUR

Welcome to our guided tour of the USS Voyager, a state-of-the-art space vessel stuck in the Delta Quadrant and armed with some Jefferies tubes and a fine collection of cactus plants



The rest of your gang usually take up good shooting positions rather than just storming in.



A sad moment. Still, not to worry, eh?



"What episode were you in?"

Hunter, a Predator-type of alien who promises to deliver some hot deathmatching action. Instead you're treated to the same routine you get at the end of *Soldier Of Fortune*, where the boss walks around for a few minutes and then stands and shoots for a few more. All you need to do is get out of the way when he's shooting and reciprocate when he isn't.

Not that the game is any less satisfying because of this. There are enough challenging moments and enough surprises to keep you on your toes and constantly coming back for more. And go back for more I most certainly did. In fact, I played it so relentlessly that I completed it over the course of two days on the medium skill level. And, for reasons that will become apparent later, I honestly can't wait to start playing it all over again.

The missions don't vary wildly from one to the next, but at least Raven has tried to mix things up a bit. There's even a stealth mission where you're meant to wait for Klingons' backs to turn, shuffle along from crate to crate, use the famous *Soldier Of Fortune* leaning round corners and

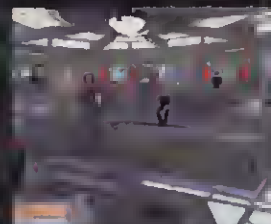
only kill when strictly necessary routine. Unfortunately, the *Quake III* engine doesn't lend itself too well to this kind of activity and, despite the *Thief*-like comments from the guards, the mission doesn't work quite as well as it should. But there's one lesson *Elite Force* has learned well from *Half-Life*: it's the importance of scripted moments. These are almost continuous, and drive the story along superbly. Think that makes it a boring and linear

experience? Think again. There's a moment in that stealth mission where you come across some Klingons about to have a fight with another race. It you wait for their conversational scuffle to end, the Klingons go out of the large room leaving you to either find a stealthy way out or kill the remaining aliens. That's what I had in mind when I decided to use my zooming eyewear to see if the Klingons' lips were moving (they were). I accidentally hit the alternate fire button instead (damn those sausage fingers). What happened was that the two sets of quarrelling aliens started shooting each other, until only a few were left that could be easily dispatched.

DIG YOUR OWN HOLE

Scripted moments are not only triggered by your presence, they dynamically react to your actions. The choices you make really do affect the outcome of the game.

If there was one criticism we have levelled at *HL* in the past it's that for all the clever ways it tricks you into thinking it is



1 The bridge. The place where people stand in corners pretending to look busy and fall over in perfect coordination. Also features some nice, big comfy chairs to recline in.



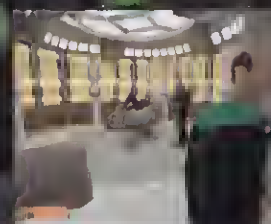
2 Meeting room. Here you will normally find the crew nursing hangovers and sipping Klingon coffee while trying to come up with a solution to the galaxy's problems.



3 Captain's ready room. This room is always ready for Janeway's meaning to Tuvok, smooching with allons and spanking ensigns.



4 Mess hall. Paris and Chakotay choke on Neelix's latest cockroach à l'orange. Despite being called the mess hall, it is in fact very tidy and clean.



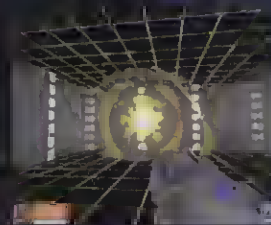
5 Sick bay. Where they ended up after the aforementioned cockroach feast.



6 Recreation. Does anyone know how to play that bloody game? No? Oh, OK then.



7 Engineering. Half-human, half-Klingon woman have been known to shout and look flustered here.



8 Holodeck. Doesn't seem to be working. Or maybe it's simulating a completely different holodeck.



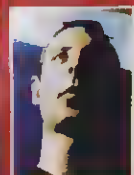
9 Private quarters. This is Alox's room. It has about as much personality as an ashtray.



10 The Brig. "I ate Neelix with a side order of Fava Beans. Tasted like chicken."

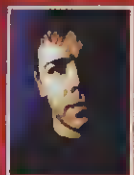
SECOND OPINION

CHRIS ANDERSON



Star Trek. Isn't that the programme with the bloke with the pointy ears in it? Who knows? Who cares? Well, lots of people obviously, but I'm not one of them, so the branding on *Elite Force* was never going to be a big pull for me. Having said that, the storyline is strong and convincing and after a while it hardly matters where its influences come from. The gameplay is pretty much what you would expect from an FPS and never really does anything to startle or surprise you in the same way *Half-Life* did but it's an enjoyable blast nonetheless.

RICHIE SHOEMAKER



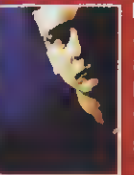
I prefer the original '60s *Star Trek* series to that of the three modern TV outings, and out of those I have to admit to liking *Voyager* the most, not because of the storylines, but because of the tension between the characters.

In some ways *Elite Force* plays to those strengths and has a story that is as good as

any of the episodes, and the fact that you can talk with the crew and feel involved throughout goes a long way to counter the repetitive action in some of the missions.

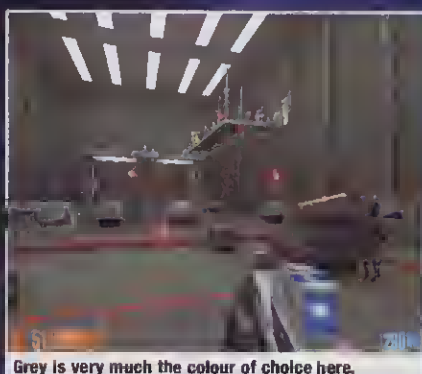
Elite Force is certainly no *Half-Life* beater; the multiplayer game has little to distinguish it, but while you're there you are made to feel part of the crew and central to the story. For that Raven should be applauded.

DAVE WOODS

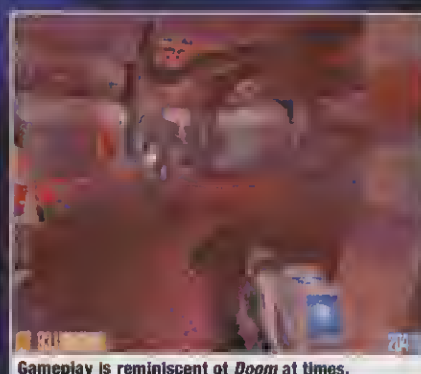


I'm not a massive *Star Trek* fan, so I wasn't amazingly excited by the prospect of *Voyager* apart from the fact it's from Raven and powered by the *Quake III* engine. Having played through the first ten levels I reckon FPS fans everywhere should buy it. It's good fun. However, after full-on

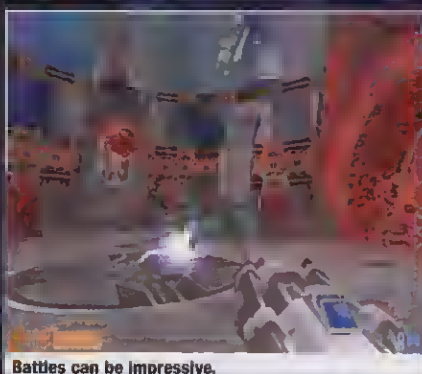
Counter-Strike sessions, games like this have to be pretty special to stand out. *Half-Life* is still better, because of the AI, which is far more important than the graphics in a single-player campaign. Someone is going to come up with a game to beat it, but this isn't it. It's similar to *SoF*, but in a *Star Trek* world.



Grey is very much the colour of choice here.



Gameplay is reminiscent of *Doom* at times.



Battles can be impressive.



Time to take cover, methinks.

← not, it is a game on rails, a story that can only ever go one way, the way it was scripted. *Voyager*, with the introduction of its new scripting system, actually does leave the story open at certain crucial points, with what you do and how you do it deciding where the story goes next. And, although the differences in plot are not major, they do add an unexpected twist. Once you realise this, the story becomes much more personal and you start to care about what happens rather than letting it all occur

around you. Apart from the obvious choice you make right at the beginning (man or woman, man or woman...) there are times when your actions not only affect whether some characters live or die they also affect the way the rest of the *Voyager* crew sees you and treats you. We'll mention just one of these instances and the time when it finally clicked that things could have happened differently. If you're afraid we're giving a major story spoiler, don't be, but you can always skip to the end of the paragraph. At one point

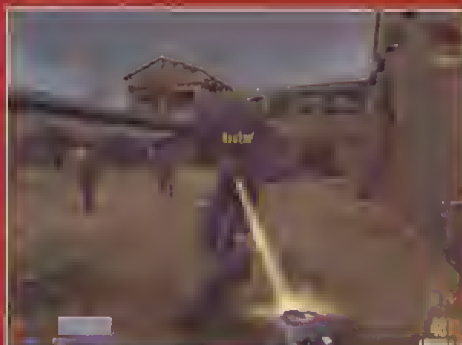
a character is kidnapped by the Borg, while on the cube with Seven and a handful of others you see that character in the process of being assimilated. The redshirts all shout that something must be done to stop it, while Seven pragmatically states that you'd be putting the mission at risk by trying to save him and it's probably too late anyway. I tried to save him but realised that Seven was right and there was nothing I could do, as she then proceeded to scold me for jeopardising the mission while the rest of the crew

MULTIPLAYER

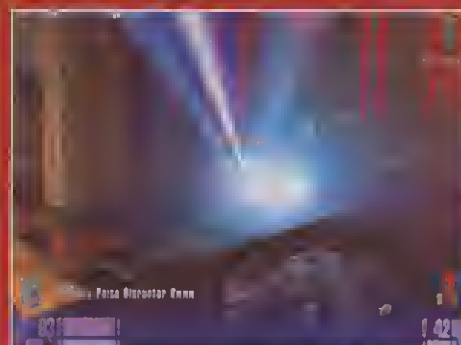
How many times do you see cool guns in a *Star Trek* episode? Anyone who's played *Klingon Honor Guard* knows how poor the normal array of Trekkie weapons feel for people brought up on rocket launchers and railguns. In *Elite Force*, there's still nothing anywhere near as satisfying as a *Quake* weapon, and it suffers especially in the multiplayer mode. In single player, however, the guns feel adequate enough and are perfectly balanced to suit the enemies. As in *Quake*, you can zoom in at any time thanks to a special device over your eye. Not that this is of much use in multiplayer games. The maps are mostly too corridor based and lack the real quality to make them special. But this is the *Quake III* engine, people are bound to make some good ones for it. And you do get to choose from any character skin from the game, after all. Cleverly, you get to play some of the multiplayer maps during the single-player game when you step into the Holodeck to try out some of the new weapons. Although, of course, you don't get to disintegrate Janeway in those. Which is a great shame.



The Doctor is about to get struck off.



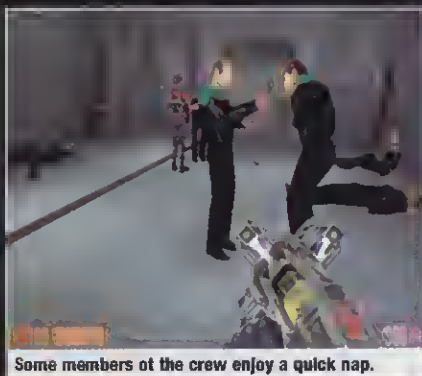
Some of the weapons are a bit puny.



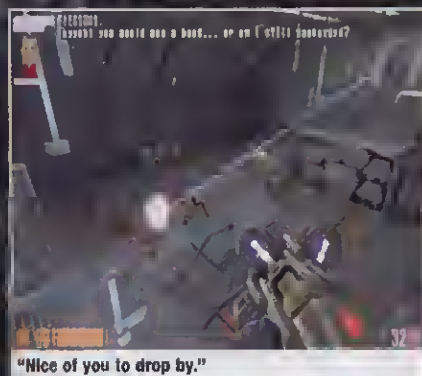
Hopefully, there'll be some better maps on the way.



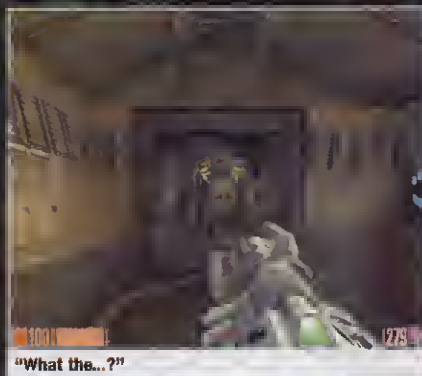
Taking a sideways glance at things.



Some members of the crew enjoy a quick nap.



"Nice of you to drop by."



"What the...?"

consoled me by saying I'd done everything possible. I thought nothing of it until later, once the mission was completed and I'd been beamed back on to Voyager, where Tuvok expressed his disappointment at my failure to bring the character back. "Hang on," I thought, "it's not my fault, go and stuff your logically constructed ears up your rational Vulcan arse." I just carried on and completed the game trying to ignore a nagging thought at the back of my mind. But the seed of doubt had been sown: maybe I should have saved him. So off I went and loaded up an old game. This time I didn't even try to save him. I just

As I write I'm already planning the next parallel universe moment I'm going to experiment with.

But while this scripting system does give the game an extra dimension, we shouldn't get too carried away. It's not really a million miles away from the *Fighting Fantasy* kind of choices such as "If you smoke the strange pipe the troll is offering turn to page 142 and become a crack-head, if you slice him in half turn to 487 and retrieve the magical spatula of Grannor, if you make a pass at him turn to 319 and seek professional advice," and it's nowhere near the kind of freedom offered by the mighty *Deus Ex*.

“The scripting system leaves the story open at crucial points, with you deciding where the story goes next”

walked on ignoring the pleas. Seven congratulated me on making the right choice and the Hazard Team practically spat at me in disgust. Then I went back again and found I could save him (you have to be pretty nippy), earning pats on the back all round. This by itself would probably be remarkable enough, but throughout the rest of the game the attitude of major characters was different, I'd impressed them. Not only that, but the end of that particular level is completely different. Needless to say, I immediately started thinking of other moments that could have turned out differently.

There's no disputing, however, that it elevates *Elite Force* above other chumpy, hairy-knuckled first-person rides out there. It also adds some very necessary replayability value, because the game is somewhat on the short side. It took me a day and a half of solid playing to complete it. And when I say solid, I mean I had to be fed intravenously, I literally couldn't help myself carrying on beyond any healthy limits.

STAR QUAKE

Ever since *Quake III* presented itself as little more than a fabulous engine, we've been waiting for a single-player game

INPERSPECTIVE

Voyager may not have the ridiculous gore that makes *Soldier Of Fortune* so compulsive, but it does have team mates and a proper story. *Kiss* is good for a quick blast, *Daikatana* is good for nothing and *Deus Ex* is the future of computer games. And we've heard that *Half-Life* is alright.

Half-Life

Daikatana

Deus Ex

Kiss Psycho Circus

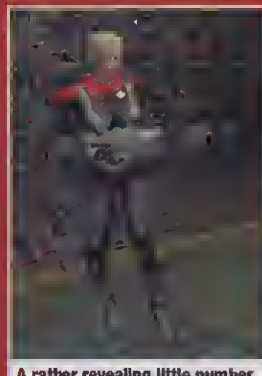
Star Trek Voyager

Soldier Of Fortune

that would do it justice. After all, it's the main reason *Voyager* was preceded by such a wave of expectation, in spite of the appalling track record of almost every single *Star Trek* game before. And while *Elite Force* makes full use of the curve possibilities it has to admit that it was designed for the creation of small claustrophobic spaces. Curiously, though, the game works much better in wide open areas such as hangar bays and cargo areas than in stuffy corridors and small rooms, and it's a shame Raven didn't experiment more with the spacious side of the game.

SEVEN OF NINE

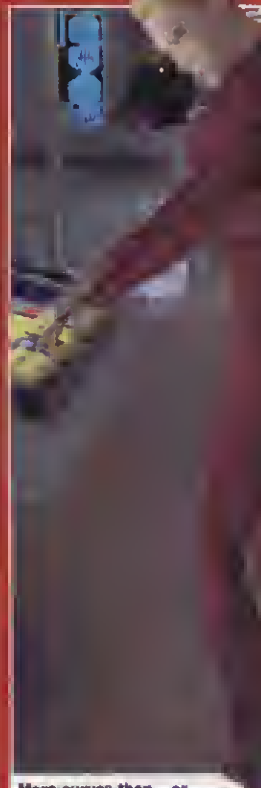
Raven has cleverly exploited the best things about *Voyager*, the ones that made it a good sci-fi series. The Borg, species 8472, the battles and, of course, Seven of Nine. The *Quake III* engine is famed for its curves, but it pales in comparison to this ex-Borg's perfect shape. Despite being the only member of the crew not voiced by the actor from the series, her presence is essential in the game. Any *Star Trek* game of this sort is inevitably going to be scrutinised by hardcore fans, so they had to do it really. And like every good cyberbabe, she gets to try out all sorts of outfits.



A rather revealing little number.



Not available from C&A.



More curves than... er...

Another small *Quake* problem is that walking is slightly too slow and running is exceedingly fast. You don't notice as much in the heat of battle, where speed is always an ally, but when you're casually exploring *Voyager* it feels like you're on roller skates. The ship itself is recreated in fine detail, and the experience is enhanced by being able to amble round between missions, making you feel like a part of the crew.

Considering the lack of competition, *Voyager* is probably the best single-player FPS since *Half-Life*. It has a truly interactive story, a team that fights on your side intelligently and it uses the best engine around. There's still plenty of room for improvement though, and it will be interesting to see whether the likes of *Duke Nukem Forever* and *Return To Castle Wolfenstein* can turn first-person shooters back into the undisputed king of computer gaming genres. Or is the future

the *Deus Ex* role-playing crossover? For the time being, just be happy that you can once again blow things up in a proper story and that the killing is a little less senseless. **PC2**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** A P350 with 64Mb RAM

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Great new scripting system
• Good story • Team mates • Some spectacular battles.

DOWNERS Weapons as soft as expected • Some levels feel too repetitive • At not brilliant

84 Not quite the elite, but still a formidable force

GRAND PRIX 3

★ 2000 • High • Out now



Martin Korda gets buckled up and prepares himself for some hardcore racing action

F1 racing just isn't what it used to be. Over the last few years, just about every race has deteriorated into the type of procession you'd expect to see on a Sunday afternoon along a quiet country lane, as convoys of elderly folk make their way back home for tea and cake after a day at the seaside. It's all become a little too predictable. Let me give you just a couple of examples. When he's not nursing any



broken limbs, Michael Schumacher inevitably throws away his chances of a third world title by trying to ram his nearest rival off the track during the final race. David Coulthard always claims that it's his year, only to

finish third, and Mika Hakkinen consistently displays the charisma of a catatonic newt in his post-victory press conferences. As for watching the races, it's always worrying when you actually start looking forward to the adverts. Yes, Grand Prix racing has lost some of its excitement and unpredictability, some of the magic that once made it so appealing. Which ironically brings us perfectly onto the subject of *GP3*.

HERE WE GO AGAIN

Perhaps they all knew something I didn't, but when a copy of *GP3*

finally made it into the *PC ZONE* office, several members of the team reacted with the kind of excitement they usually reserve for knitting magazines. Crowding round my monitor, they claimed that it looked just like *GP2*, before walking back to their desks with a sense of smug satisfaction. To an extent, they weren't too far off the mark. Basically, and unfortunately somewhat predictably, *GP3* is *GP2* with a few extra bells, but to write the game off as nothing other than a souped-up rerun is somewhat unfair. To its credit, the game does manage to recreate the sport more

accurately than any other F1 game currently on the market, and even more faithfully than either of the previous two titles.

Let's start with the graphics shall we? As you can see for yourselves from the screen shots, the visuals are somewhat of a mixed bag. It's clear that a great deal of attention has been paid to the accurate recreation of the circuits, with each one actually looking like the real thing in just about every detail. The cars are also beautifully rendered, moving fluidly and realistically, and you can even see their reflections in the water during wet races. However, this apparent attention

★ WALKTHROUGH

RACE AHEAD

Once you've mastered the driving basics and managed to qualify somewhere other than last, it's important you learn the intricacies of each track. Here's our guide on how to succeed on the world's most famous circuit, Monaco



1 You've qualified fourth, which is hardly a disaster. However, overtaking opportunities at Monaco are scarce, so it's not going to be easy to move up the field. A fast start is essential, so revving your engine like crazy and wheel-spinning is not the way to go. Instead, accelerate away firmly but smoothly.



2 Time for some gentle persuasion. The first corner is a slow right-hander, so when you're level with the car to your right, start to subtly edge towards it. If you can get your nose in front before this first corner, then the other driver should back off and let you through. That's one place gained already.



3 Staying tight left up the hill, cruise round the long bend in fourth gear moving slowly to the middle of the track as the bend ends, then come down to first for the tight right-hand corner. Accelerate down the small straight, and leave braking as late as possible to close up on the car in front.



4 This next section is the most infamous part of the circuit. If you mess it up, you'll get stuck against the wall, or wind up off the track. Either way, you'll end up looking like a total nonce, so stay tucked behind the car in front and hold the racing line.



Check out the detail on that helmet.



One small nudge and that Williams will skid off. Go on, you know you want to.



Look, no hands.



The cameraman's view, a second before the accident.



As with all racing games, the starts are usually the most exciting part of the race.

to detail doesn't apply to everything. The tyre walls are blocky, the pit crews mannequin-like and the crowds look like rows of cardboard cutouts. All of which leads you to think that it's hardly ground-breaking stuff.

AND THEY'RE OFF

The handling of your car has also been modified. Rather than taking corners casually, you now have to really fight with the wheel, as your vehicle threatens to spin off the circuit at any moment. Although it's initially frustrating, it does make proceedings far more challenging, and if you're playing

with a game wheel, hugely realistic. The more you tweak the settings of your car to individual circuit requirements, the easier it is to drive around corners, but getting the right balance requires many laps of testing first. Down force, brake balance, gear ratios,

It's also incredibly anal. If you're not into dribbling spoddily onto your keyboard while weighing up the advantages of lowering your rear wing by one centimetre, then a huge portion of the game's just going to pass you by.

Once you've found your ideal

“On more difficult levels, the computer-controlled drivers are easily the most realistic we've ever seen”

fuel load, tyre choices, pit-stop strategies, they're all there, and getting these right can make the difference between finishing first or sixth. It really is that marginal.

setup, sorted out your race strategy and had a go at qualifying, it's time to start racing for real. It's only now that you realise just how close to the real

thing *GP3* actually is, although a certain amount of licence has been allowed in terms of collisions and damage and, thankfully, races aren't as procession-like as they've become in real life. Just playing on the Rookie setting is enough to display the quality of the opposition AI, while on more difficult levels, computer-controlled drivers are easily the most realistic we've ever seen in a driving game. They move to block you off if you try a daring overtaking manoeuvre, they all have different race strategies and if you make even the smallest mistake, they'll rarely fail to

capitalise on your ineptitude. As if your life wasn't difficult enough though, you have to contend with varying weather conditions, which can not only change mid-race, but affect the handling of your car beyond all recognition. If there's heavy rain, the cars in front of you will throw up a curtain of spray, reducing your visibility to just a couple of metres. Driving in the wet is like riding blindfolded on a unicycle, over a frozen oil-covered lake. Fortunately, you're provided with a host of driving aids to help you get to grips with the controls, which can be turned on and off at will during any part of a race.



5 The sudden distance that appears between you and the car in front through the tunnel is pretty deceptive. This is only because the corner before it is so slow. Start wide and move gradually right. If you're close enough, slipstream the car in front and use the extra speed to outbrake him at the corner.



6 If you're not near enough to use the slipstream trick, as demonstrated in the picture, then you're going to have to bide your time again. Brake late, and stay tucked right under the rear wing of the car in front, as you go left then right. Don't try anything clever, as you'll only end up spinning or something.



7 Hit the throttle round the long left, navigate through the s-bend and then the right-hander. Make sure you stay just behind the car in front, but be careful you don't collide with it, as you'll break your car's nose, and the driver who you just rammed will probably try to break yours in the pits later on.



8 The final bend before the home straight offers the opening you've been waiting for. Brake late, and as your opponent stringently sticks to the racing line, cut inside and accelerate diagonally in front of him. He'll have to slow up to let you through (well hopefully), allowing you to pull away on the straight.

END

IN PERSPECTIVE

Although *GP3* is the best F1 game around, *F1 2000* and *F1 World Grand Prix* are pretty close behind. *GP3* wins in the realism and attention to detail stakes, but it's not the massive leap forward we've been hoping for. Any of these titles are more than worthy of your money.

Grand Prix 3

F1 2000

F1 World Grand Prix



No waits. That's what he does.



Monaco has plenty of places to stop off for a fog break.



Schumacher passes Schumacher. Or is it vice versa?



Driving in rainy conditions naturally means that your visibility levels are greatly reduced.



Damon's attempt to impress the ladies ended in disaster.



You go left, I'll go right.

THE GAFF MEISTER

Commentary is an option sadly lacking from *GP3*, which is part of the reason the game can seem a little lifeless. After all, half the fun of watching F1 on TV is listening to the inane babblings of motor sport's most loved commentator Murray Walker. Here are a few of his finest gaffs.

Sensory Confusion

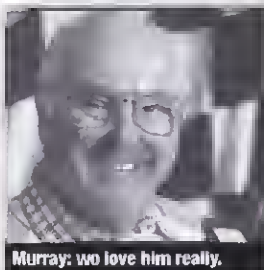
Murray has often struggled with his grasp of the five human senses. On one occasion he claimed that the leader of a race could see the second placed car "in his earphone" only to make amends by helpfully informing viewers that they could "see visually with their eyes".

Stating the Obvious

Always eager to inform, you could never accuse him of lacking observational skills, as not even the smallest detail gets past him. Some of the all-time classics include: "With half the race gone, there is still half the race left to go," and "It's raining and the track is wet." Genius.

Confused Gibberish

When excited, Murray can make about as much sense as a Swahili VCR manual. Master of the metaphor, he once described an F1 car as a chicken and commented that the atmosphere of a race was so tense, that you could cut it with a cricket stump. Then of course there's: "This has been a great season for Nelson Piquet, as he is now known, and always has been," and not forgetting, "This is the part of the circuit where the Williams tends to be, not tends to be /s slower than the Benetton historically, today." Nice one Murray.



Murray: we love him really.

REALISM VS ENTERTAINMENT

So we've established that *GP3* is realistic, but is it any fun to play? The answer to this question really depends on what you're looking for. If you're a GP anorak who can't wait to start tweaking car settings, painstakingly learning circuit layouts and braking distances, while not minding the fact that the cars and drivers are (and we had a real problem with this) from two seasons ago, then this is probably the game for you. However, if you're not too concerned with the above, and you just want a fun F1 simulation,

600 hp engine. The lack of team communication also leads to a sense that you're a one (wo)man team, rather than a member of a competitive collective. Races would be so much more entertaining if you could get information from your pit crew over a radio, rather than having to squint at the display on your steering wheel, to find out how far ahead of you the car in front is. Then there's the problem that there are no team orders or tactics whatsoever. If you need to win the last race of the season to take the championship, your team-mate will make no effort at

LAN connection, as playing with humans adds a random element, as well as rectifying the problem of a lack of team work in the single-player races. (When we asked Hasbro about the game's Internet options, we received a cagey reply. There were no servers for the game as we went to press – watch our Online section for updates). Just like real-life F1 though, the series has become too predictable, but if you're a GP enthusiast, then this is the perfect game for you. **PC2**

“The realism and over-emphasis on detail has to a certain extent taken away some of the excitement of just racing”

then you should think hard before parting with your cash.

See, the problem with *GP3* is that it just becomes too clinical. The realism and over-emphasis on detail has to a certain extent taken away some of the excitement of just racing, and overall, the game lacks any type of atmosphere. For starters, there's no commentary option, but I suppose you'd expect that from a simulation. However, there's no pit communication either. Entire races are spent listening to nothing other than the engine of your car, which sounds more like a fly in a jam jar than a

all to help you out. Little things like this would have made *GP3* so much more fun to play.

SHUFFLING FORWARDS

GP3 is undoubtedly excellent, but it could have been so much better. In terms of realism and accuracy, it has no equal, but it's not the huge leap forward from *GP2* that we were all hoping for. The series has become too familiar, and although it's well worth buying this third instalment, it's hard to call it an essential purchase. The most amount of fun you'll have with it is if you've got access to a decent

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 266
Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** Don't try playing this unless you've got at least a PII 300, although we strongly recommend a PII 450 with 64Mb RAM and a powerful 3D card to get the most out of the game

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS** Hugely realistic • Generally excellent graphics • Massive attention to detail • Great weather effects • Superb LAN gameplay
- DOWNERS** Too clinical for non-hardcore enthusiasts • No real atmosphere • No team work • Too similar to *GP2* • Poor sound • Teams and drivers are from two seasons ago

80 The Mika Hakkinen of PC F1 games

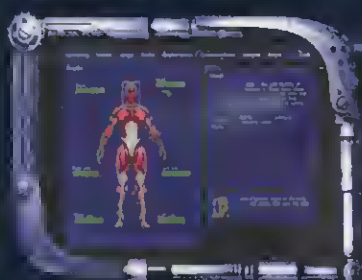
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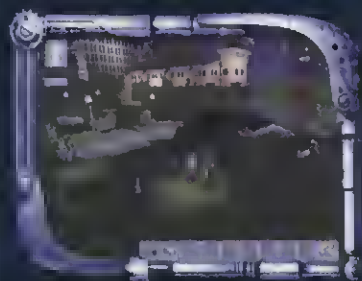
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RESIDENT EVIL

★ £29.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

Capcom may be about to bring its PC reputation back from the dead. **James Lyon** investigates

Anyone who read last month's issue will know that Capcom's previous PlayStation conversion, *Dino Crisis* didn't do as well as expected (56 per cent). Nevertheless, they're still going ahead and releasing the third episode of its more successful zombie epic on PC just as it has the others. And, strange or not, even though it uses the exact play mechanics as *Dino Crisis*, it's a lot, lot better. As was mentioned before, dinosaurs just aren't scary, whereas zombies certainly are. It may not quite be brown trousers at dawn time, but play with the lights out and it's as good as any Romero movie.

Expanding on the foundations of the Umbrella Corporation's T-Virus disaster, you play Jill Valentine, recently resigned

IN PERSPECTIVE

It's much better than *Dino Crisis* and just as good as *RE2*. *Nocturne* doesn't quite cut it.

Dino Crisis

RE2

Nemesis

Nocturne

clean up the mess (not that they do much of a job). There's even the chance to switch control to one of them halfway through.

The game itself literally starts with a bang with Jill being thrown outside by an explosion. You're left in the middle of the city

"Backgrounds are brilliantly detailed, giving an extreme sense of being caught up in the middle of the devastation"

member of Raccoon City's special forces, and who you may recall was a controllable character from the first game. All Jill wants to do is get out of the city, which isn't going to be easy as it's been barricaded and overrun by those flesh-eating fiends. You're not alone the whole time, though – along the way, Jill meets up with mercenaries sent by Umbrella to

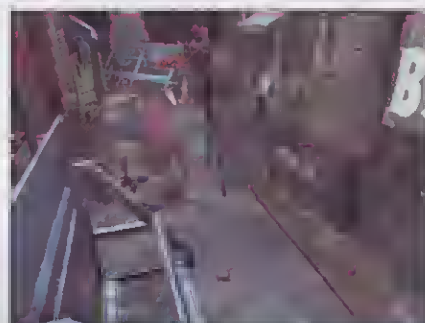
surrounded by zombies and not much time to get out of the way. It's the first, but not the only, similarity with the second game, only this time you spend a lot of your time outside. Most of the city may be reduced to blocked alleys and impassable debris, but it's certainly effective in making the game feel a lot larger. Backgrounds are brilliantly



That's the Nemesis. Not a very nice man.



Nothing worse than being humped by a zombie dog.



The shotgun gets put to satisfying usage.



Actually, there's nothing worse than being humped by a, er, thing.

SPECIAL MODES

There's also a bonus game included in *Nemesis* called *Mercenaries*. In this you have to reach a location before a bomb implanted in your body goes off. It's all well and good but for some reason Capcom has included it at the start instead of as a bonus when completing the game, as on the PlayStation. It may just be a minor niggle, but why do they think this is such a good idea? Surely they should at least give us something to work towards in the main game. It's the same with the costumes which you can select right at the start. Maybe it's just us, but we like having to work to get these little bonuses. Getting them right away deflates the experience a little.

3: NEMESIS

**PCZONE
AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE**

detailed, giving an extreme sense of being caught up in the middle of the desolation and disaster. Couple this with the eerie sounds of the wind and the moan of distant zombies and you've got an atmosphere that captures the game perfectly. And for once the resolution can be put up as high as 1600x1200 which gives the PC version a much crisper look than the PlayStation, although the FMV is still a bit fuzzy in comparison.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

Expect nothing new in terms of puzzles. You're not going to find yourself completely stumped with any of the problems in here. Weapons, also, are carried over from the other games. You start with the standard pistol which takes forever to kill anything with. The good news is that it's

start. Don't bother selecting that if you like some challenge in your games, though.

Gunpowder has to be collected and mixed with a special tool to produce certain kinds of bullets. It's a little unnecessary and takes up more inventory space but there's also plenty of normal ammo lying around, too. One good addition to the game is that certain objects in the scenery, such as barrels, can be shot at causing explosions which can take out groups of enemies at the same time. Although it's obvious that you're meant to shoot these when there's more than two zombies around it still feels like quite a godsend in a tight spot.

Apart from zombies you've got your usual rabid dogs, giant spiders and hideous beasts, which have a tendency to leap

going to mean you waste your ammo or get you killed, so it's best to run away very fast whenever he's about. Which is fine most times, but get hit by him once and it's sometimes hard to get away again.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

At certain points, usually when Nemesis appears, the action halts and you're given two options to choose from. The choice usually ranges from either hiding or fighting, although the outcome of what you pick may not be quite so obvious. Each

it off on purpose, and even if you do it's hard to get to grips with the controls afterwards. Yes, that's right, the movement controls are exactly the same as before. While not exactly impossible, there are plenty of times when a slight error in judgement causes you to unfairly get attacked. The save points are still limited to using ink

couple of shocks in store for the unwary. It may not be quite as scary if you've played the first two games, but it can be mildly disturbing when something completely unexpected happens.

OEJA VU

So where Capcom failed with *Dino Crisis*, *Nemesis* succeeds. If you've played *Resident Evil 2* you're not really getting anything new but it's still on a parallel with it in terms of quality.

Anyone who wants to see how the story continues in the saga won't be too disappointed.

OK, the puzzles are simplistic, the controls are frustrating and the acting's just passable, but that classic zombie movie atmosphere makes it an enjoyable experience to play through at least once. **PC**



Remember this place?



Everybody loves an explosion.



"Oh, pardon me. Did I interrupt something?"

ribbons on typewriters and it can be a little difficult to judge exactly how much damage you can take before you die, so it's often a case of how much you want to risk doing before you save.

The problems of backtracking and only being able to carry a limited number of things are also back. They seem to have been given a little revision to make them less annoying but having to work your way through places you've been before can still be a chore, though there's often a

possible to get your hands on the shotgun a lot earlier than in the previous games and it proves to be just as satisfying in taking off a zombie's head in an explosion of messy blood and gore. Incidentally, this is in hard mode – easy mode gives you most of the weapons and infinite saves at the

at you from a distance. And, of course, there's the Nemesis. The titular enemy makes a dramatic appearance from time to time, his sole purpose to hunt and chase you and your S.T.A.R.S. team down ('S.T.A.R.S.' being the only thing he says). He really is unstoppable and trying to kill him is either

choice won't affect the outcome of the game at all, but it at least provides some replay value.

Other new things included in the game are a 180 degree quick-turn and a dodge command. The former can come in handy quite often but the latter is quite tricky and it's not always possible to pull

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium 200 Memory 48Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3D Card **WE SAY** PII 266, 64Mb RAM

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Terrific atmosphere •

Interesting story • Hi-res graphics

DOWNERS Poor controls • Nothing

particularly new • Unskippable cut-

scenes • Fuzzy FMV

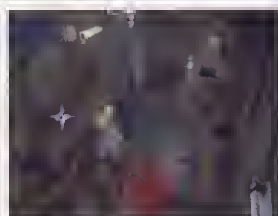
81 More of the same but it's got a certain gory charm about it

WALKTHROUGH

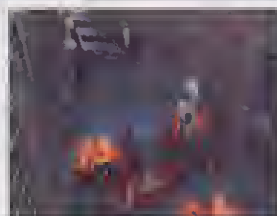
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LIGHT MY FIRE

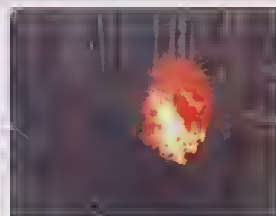
A brief look at one of the fiendishly tricky puzzles contained in *Nemesis*



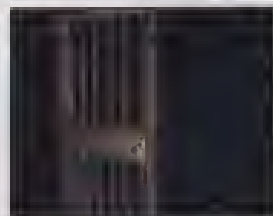
1 What's this flashing here? Why, it's lighter fluid. What possible use could this have? I did pick up a lighter earlier. Could it be so obvious? Well, yes, actually.



2 Beside a horde of flaming zombies, here we have a door locked with a rope soaked in oil. What fiendish blockade is this? How can we get past such an obstacle?



3 Probably by putting the lighter fluid in the lighter and setting the rope on fire. A couple of seconds later and the lock's been burnt off.



4 Which leaves you to go through. The door-opening scenes are still here and still can't be skipped but at least they're slightly faster than the PS version.



Someone had forgotten to tell Terrance that the 100m sprint had been rescheduled for the next day.

SYDNEY 2000

★ £39.99 • Eidos • Out now

This month *Martin Korda* learnt all about wrist ache and blistered fingers after playing *Sydney 2000* for a week. So much so, he had to type this review with his elbows

It's an all too common argument. It's not a game's graphics that matter, but the gameplay, a line of thinking that's usually followed by half an hour of self-indulgent ranting about the good old days of the Spectrum, and how its wire-frame graphics never mattered that much because the games were so much fun. For those of you who remember the basic visuals but fun gameplay of *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* from about ten years ago, and the mass of copycat spin-offs that we've been subjected to ever since, *Sydney 2000* will seem all too familiar.

If you hadn't already guessed, what we have here is yet another keyboard-bashing track and field game, with a few novelty events thrown in for good measure, and, of course, some 3D accelerated graphics. Our hopes that it would at least make a token attempt to move away from the one-dimensional gameplay we've grown so accustomed to were put to rest about seven minutes after we'd loaded it up. Of the 12 events on offer, we discovered that eight consist of little more than frantic button hammering, the type of which gives barely pubescent boys and male

loners everywhere a huge advantage over the rest of the human race.

FINGER TAPPING

If you're thinking you can play *S2000* successfully with a keyboard, then think again. For the best results, you'll need to use a joystick, as it's a far easier way of trying out a whole range of key-tapping styles. There's the two fingers on one hand technique (crap), the one finger on each hand technique (requires the knee as a base for the pad) and, of course, the thumb-jab method (hold the

pad on either side with two hands), which we found to be the most effective. No matter which one you go for, you're going to need forearms like iron and leather-like fingertips if you want to play for more than 15 minutes at a time.

The best way of practising your technique is with the 100m sprint, as there's little more to the event than said action, apart from the ingenious idea that you have to press the action button to dip for the line. The 110m hurdles is a cunning variation on the 100m flat race. Instead of just pummeling away, you have to press the action key when you reach a hurdle (clever), attempting to lead with the correct leg as you do so. Most of you though, will probably find it's quicker to just wade straight through the barriers.

The 100m swim requires about the same level of skill as the 100m run, ie none at all, although this time you're going to need some stamina. These races last the best part of a minute, so pacing yourself is essential if you want to avoid chronic wrist cramp and the predictable barrage of jokes from your friends and colleagues.

Just when you start to think it's all a bit too easy, you realise that it is. The hammer, javelin and

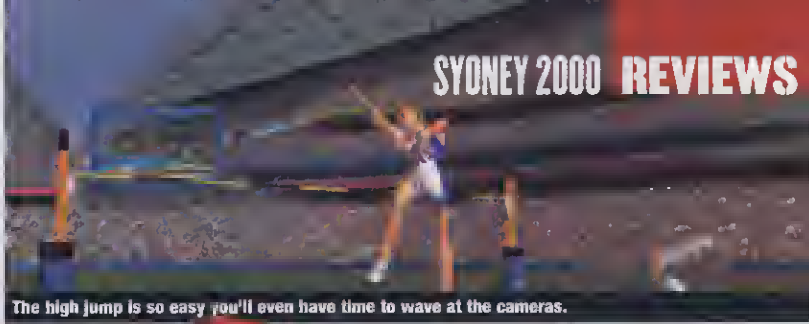
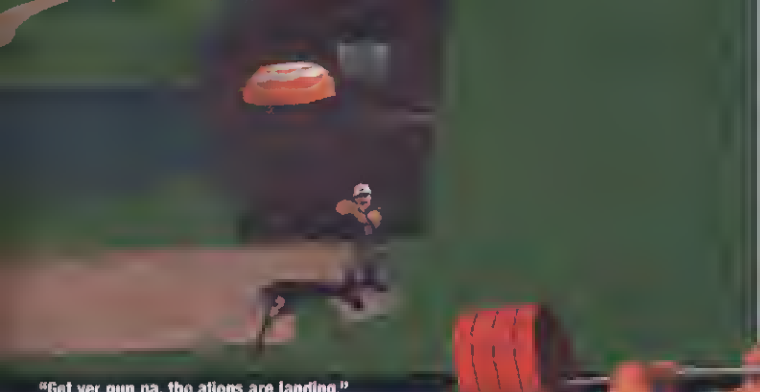
triple jump require a vague semblance of timing, in which you must monitor your run up/spin, while selecting an angle of elevation for your throw/jump. As always, it's important to tap the buttons as fast as possible while concentrating on these *hugely* taxing tasks. Some of the animation is laughable, particularly in the javelin, as athletes amble up to the throwing line like they're having an afternoon stroll, rather than competing for Olympic gold. The high jump is the most bizarre event of the lot. Run up, press the action button when your leading foot hits the floor, then let it go to flip your ankles over. Weight lifting isn't much better, once again turning out to be nothing more than an exercise in speed and endurance. The whole single player experience is about as uplifting as a cheap bra.

If you command even the most basic hand/eye coordination, you should find that you break several of the Arcade mode records within a couple of tries, and after the inevitable sense of smugness and satisfaction, you'll soon realise that there's very little left to challenge you.

INSPIRATION ABOUNDS

Which leads us onto the four events which require something a





"Get yer gun pa, tho ations are landing."

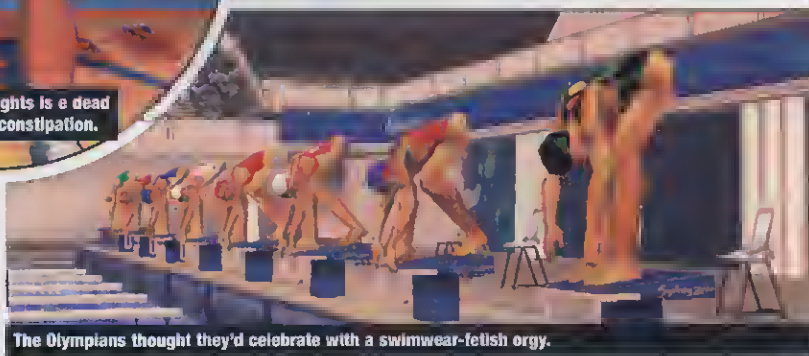
The high jump is so easy you'll even have time to wave at the cameras.



Lifting heavy weights is a dead cert for curing constipation.



The cycling event requires both speed and strategy.



The Olympians thought they'd celebrate with a swimwear-fetish orgy.

But you haven't got one of these in your tool kit.

little different. The developers must have been having a particularly inspired day when they came up with this lot. Firstly, there's the skeet shooting. Armed with a rifle and an aiming circle, you have to shoot down clay pigeons before they hit the ground. However, your task is made incredibly difficult by the sluggish movement of your gun, often making it impossible for you to get anywhere near the targets. To make matters worse, our attempts to vent our frustrations on the judges and crowds also (unfortunately) ended in failure.

The kayaking is quite possibly the most patronising event of the

lot. Holding down one of two buttons to propel yourself forwards and backwards, you have to navigate some rapids by (wait for it) steering your kayak left and right, while making sure you pass through every gate along the way. Gaming really doesn't get much more exciting than this. The cycling and diving events are perhaps the only two which have had some thought put into them. Cycling requires strategy and speed, and you'll have to make sure you pace yourself round the circuit, but diving is the most challenging event of all, as mastering the many different types of somersault with correct movements on the direction pad takes patience and skill. Even though they're hardly born of genius, at least these four events give your fingers and thumbs occasional respite.

VARIATION ON A THEME

If you get bored with the all-too-easy arcade option, you can try your hand at training a bunch of no-hoper wimps into superstars. Starting off with 12 athletes (one for each event) who each possess the athleticism of a five-year-old and the physique of Mr Muscle, it's your job to train them up in a virtual gym, and watch them blossom into world beaters.

When you start out, it won't matter if you're the fastest button tapper in the world, as your group of inadequates will put in the kind of performances usually watched by parents at primary school sports days.

In order to take your team members to the next stage of their physical development, you must complete a set of tasks in the gymnasium within a given time limit. No prizes for guessing how the developers have tackled this one. Any ideas? It's a tough one we know, so try not to look too surprised when we tell you that lots of key tapping and very

of pride and probably a huge sense of relief that it's all over.

MORE OF THE SAME

Of course there's one factor which always manages to save games like *Sydney 2000*, multiplayer, and it's in this field (ho ho ho) that *S2000* excels, allowing up to eight of you to compete simultaneously. For some strange, almost inexplicable reason, when you get two or more people round a monitor, it suddenly becomes more fun than picking the fluff out of a supermodel's navel. *Sydney 2000* can turn even the most serious

"When you get two or more people round a monitor, it becomes more fun than picking fluff out of a supermodel's navel"

little skill is once again involved. What is positive though is that, as each athlete improves, so does their physique. In a game so bereft of ideas, it's good to see touches like this, and as their frames thicken and performance levels rise, it becomes a matter of pride to get each individual to achieve the qualifying standard needed for them to compete in the Olympics. With blooded fingers held aloft in triumph as your team walk away with gold medals, you'll feel a certain sense

person into a giggling child.

However, if you believe that age-old adage that it's the gameplay and not the graphics which make a game, then you have to wonder why you'd want to buy *S2000* if you already own a similar title, either on the PC or on any other format. Apart from the coaching aspects, there's very little that's new, and graphics aside, it's hardly moved on since similar games on the Spectrum.

For the most part, there's little to choose between this and

Sergei Bubka's Millennium Games, which at least had a stab at adding some originality with its alternative control method, and a need for tactics as well as speed. If you *have* to get your hands on a track and field game, then make it Midas's offering. Its presentation and multiplayer options might be inferior, but it just shades it in the gameplay department and also offers LAN support. But if you already own a similar title, save your money and watch the Games on TV instead. **PC2**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PIII 266
Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES**
Optional 3D card **WE SAY** PIII or more,
64Mb RAM

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Great eight-player multiplayer options • Coaching options • Athletes' physiques improve as they train

DOWNERS No LAN options • Poor animation • Not much variation between events • No alternative control method

58 Uninspired finger basher, which is saved by an excellent multiplayer mode

IN PERSPECTIVE

Both of these are pretty limited in the long-term entertainment stakes, but if you choose one, make it *Sergei Bubka's Millennium Games*. It may not look as nice as *Sydney 2000* (not that *S2000* looks particularly stunning or anything), and the commentary may be totally naff, but it does just about shade it due to its alternative control system and greater need for strategy.

Sydney 2000

Sergei Bubka's Millennium Games

VERY REALISTIC SIMULATION OF A
HUMAN SOCIETY

MORE THAN 300 BUILDINGS IN A DOZEN
INDUSTRIES TO CREATE AND MANAGE

POLITICS ELECTIONS, MAYORS, MINISTERS
AND PRESIDENTS



EPISODE 1 THE RISE OF TYCOONS

STARPEACE

THE PARALLEL DOMAIN

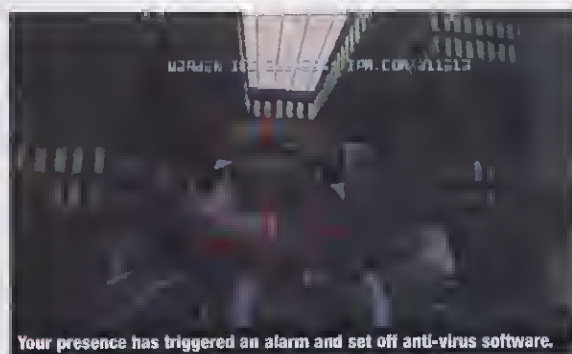

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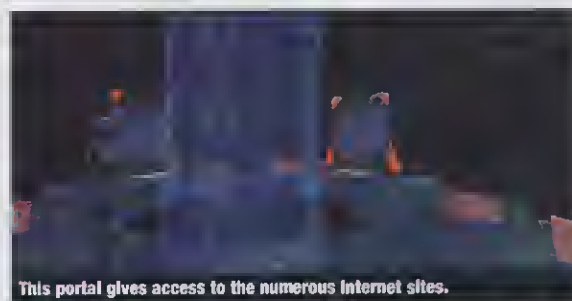
**PC
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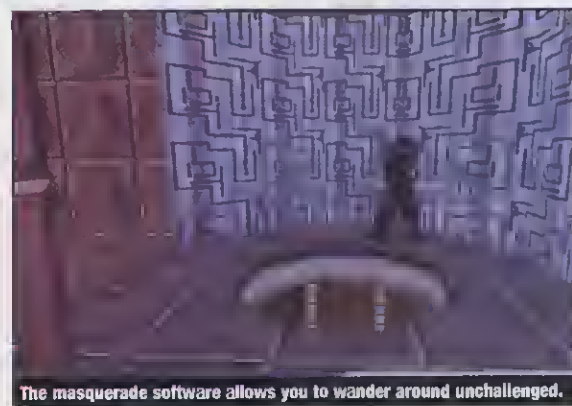
Your droid can be controlled from the first- or third-person perspective.



Your presence has triggered an alarm and set off anti-virus software.



This portal gives access to the numerous Internet sites.



The masquerade software allows you to wander around unchallenged.

AI WARS: THE AWAKENING

★ £19.95 • Nexus Information Systems • Out now

Craig Vaughan knows all about artificial intelligence – he's been struggling to obtain the real thing for years...

Despite filmmakers' best efforts to glamorise the subject, hacking has never really taken off as a mainstream crime, enjoying nothing more than passing notoriety on the back of films like *Tron*, *Sneakers* and *WarGames*, and an occasional headline with the emergence of a new virus or two. Nonetheless, it

IN PERSPECTIVE

There's nothing else quite like *AI Wars*. It might appeal to you if you're looking for something completely different, but the original gameplay doesn't excuse the graphics or sound. Go for *System Shock 2* instead. It's much better.

System Shock 2

AI Wars: The Awakening

continues to be a topic that fascinates, so it's no surprise to see a game using the subject as a premise. Best described as a first-person action and strategy

“Unfortunately, the game tends to be a victim of its own grand ideas”

hybrid, *AI Wars* casts you in the role of a disgruntled hacker out to achieve domination of the Internet by transferring your consciousness online in order to become immortal. If it sounds a trifle bizarre in theory, it is – as well as being 'off the wall' in practice. Not being able to squeeze down a phone line, you send a computer program (droid) to do your bidding, and you retain remote control of it as it wanders through the 'Internet' (which is represented as a 3D circuit board-like environment). Picking up data cubes scattered through the levels supplies your droid with passwords used to hack into

protected Internet sites in order to steal industrial secrets to sell for cash. The money earned is spent updating software programs that act as your only protection from

viruses (enemy droids) that scour the levels and attack if your presence is detected. Being discovered usually results from being too slow while hacking, or from using outdated software – either way it means a software upgrade is required, so a less well-protected site needs to be targeted to get the necessary cash. Defensive weapons include a firewall, which effectively acts as a shield; an infinite recursive calculation, which makes your opponent attempt to calculate PI, thus overloading them and preventing them pursuing you; and a Trojan horse that makes you indistinguishable from the enemy,

allowing you to slip onto their sites unchallenged. Unfortunately, the game tends to be a victim of its own grand ideas – the 'Internet' is massive and its size is reflected within the levels. This wouldn't cause too many problems were a map included, but it creates frustrations when navigating the very samey interiors. Also, despite the hefty minimum specs of the game, the graphics are dull, tired and repetitive. That said, it's the strategy that counts and on this score at least there's enough here of interest to warrant a modicum of attention. At times there's a genuinely taut atmosphere as you race against the clock to hack systems, recover data and escape through a backdoor before being discovered. Cash management also adds a tactical edge because the software programs prove useless without the updates required to compete against the enemies' constantly updated anti-hacking protocols. The weapons are novel too – whoever thought of blasting robots with PI obviously did too much maths at

school. So, by now you'll either be intrigued or totally bemused. If you fall into the former category and you can forgive the graphical shortcomings while suspending disbelief, you'll find there's an often-absorbing battle to be fought – otherwise steer well clear of this one. **PC2**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P350
Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Fine, but the addition of a 3D card helps significantly

PC2 VERDICT

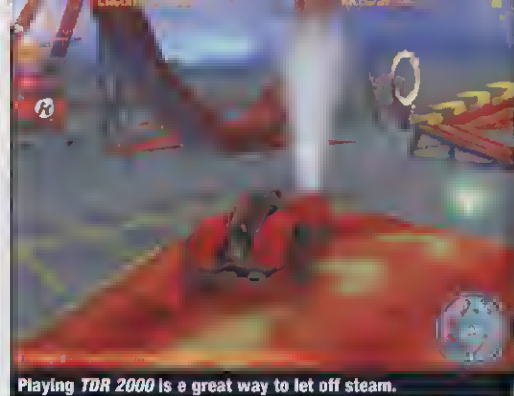
UPPERS It's fairly unique and quite a clever idea • There's a good degree of strategy • The weapons are well thought out

DOWNERS The graphics are dire • It's a bit 'off the wall' • It's too big and samey and there's no map • The speech is a joke

52 *Tron* and on and on



Prepare yourself for a rollercoaster ride. Well, sort of.



Playing TDR 2000 is a great way to let off steam.



"Mina shitting ability!" Oh, how we laughed.

CARMAGEDDON TDR 2000

★ £34.99 • SCI • Out now

When there's no more room in hell, the dead... Oh hang on, wrong game. Dave Woods is sickened and confused by a 'new' ultra-violent racer

How times change. Two years ago the media was having a field day with a 'gratuitously violent' game called *Carmageddon II*. Running over pedestrians? Oeliberately? Sick and disgusting. Now part three's here and no one's particularly bothered because games such as *Deus Ex* and *Counter Strike* are: a) realistically violent and b) part of mainstream gaming culture.

You can't help but feel for SCI. You see, the controversy whipped up by the tabloids last time around helped sell the game in spades. This time, with no front pages screaming bloody murder, the game has got to stand on its own four wheels, and stripped of its cool in-your-face rebellion, frankly there isn't a whole lot left.

HIT AND RUN

For the uninitiated, *TDR* is a racing game, with added dollops of ultra-violence. As in the old games, you can win races by: a) finishing first; b) destroying all the other cars in the race; or c) running over all the zombies that

are wandering around in the middle of the road. (That's right. The box version you're going to buy is inhabited by zombies and green blood. If you must, then you can download a patch from the Internet and change the zombies back to pedestrians and watch the old crimson gush around the screen. We repeat, if you must.) That's the theory anyway. The truth of the matter is that once you've got past the first

"The cars degrade excellently, with doors and bonnets flying off left, right and centre, and zombies splatting in half in a moist and satisfying way"

two races there's no way you can finish a race in the allotted time without earning extra time by wasting other drivers.

MISSION POSSIBLE

But that's not all. After listening to criticisms last time around, the developers have added a storyline (of sorts), which means that missions alternate with straight races. To progress, sorry, to escape from the twisted

futuristic nightmare of *TDR 2000*, you have to complete simple tasks such as collecting parts of a bomb, destroying buildings and keeping clear of reconditioned WWII bombers keen on lobbing bombs on you. It helps to add variety to the gameplay, but some of the tasks are downright tedious and others are frustrating beyond belief.

Funnily enough, we were due to review this game a couple of issues ago. In fact I spent the best part of a week playing through the 'review' code before being told that it wasn't actually reviewable after all. Big changes were going to happen apparently, which would completely alter the

subtle nuances you'd be forgiven for proclaiming that it looks just like *Carmageddon 2*. (Which if doesn't in any shape or form. Memories are just hazy old things.) The way the game plays hasn't really changed that much either, although the handling of the vehicles is much, much better. Ultimately, it just feels like a new, improved *Carmageddon*, although to expect more from a sequel these days is like hoping for a Coventry away win at Old Trafford.

ANY BAR JOBS GOING?

And then there's the humour. Or as we prefer to call it, the *humour*. Now we're not ones to sit on racial stereotypes, but the developers of *TDR 2000* are Australian, where the funniest exports can be found in Earls Court wearing corks around their necks and smashing bottles over women's heads. If that's your regular haunt on a Saturday night then you'll find the smatterings of adolescence go down well with a bottle of Hooch and a raw sausage. Over here, the words 'Cunning Stunt' died with Kenny Everett. Although some of the power-ups such as 'Oil Slicks From Your Arse' and the ram-raid 'What a Punt' had us literally rolling all the way down to the travel agents for the first tlight to funny land.

The bottom line is thus. If you loved the other two *Carmageddon* games then you're going to love this. It's the same, but better. And, if you're bored with run-of-the-mill racing games and you hate the way pedestrians dive out of the way in *Midtown Madness* then it's well worth a look. We'd recommend waiting to see what *MM2* is going to be like before shelling out your cash on this 2000 remix, though. We've been promised review code for Issue 96 and we're also going to be the proud purveyors of the exclusive demo. See you then. [22]

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PIII 266
Memory 64Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3D
card **WE SAY** For once, the publishers are telling the truth.

PCZVERDICT

⬆ **UPPERS** The best violent driving game going • Decent engine • Visual damage • Solid single-player campaign
⬇ **DOWNERS** More of the same • Not enough of an overhaul • Tedious missions

69 Don't hold the front pages



Take it to tha bridget



Sunday drivers, eh?



Look at the bloody state of that.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Depends what you want don't it? *Midtown Madness* is still the king of the less-serious racer, although with a sequel out soon it could depose itself. If you just want a good driving game then get *Colin McRae* on budget or *Need For Speed Porsche 2000*.

TDR 2000

Midtown Madness

Colin McRae

NFS Porsche 2000



There's some nice damage detail on the cars.



WALKTHROUGH

A CRAFTY SHERMAN

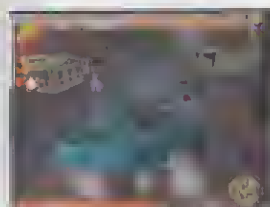
Don't expect too much from *TDR 2000's* missions



1 The map shows you exactly where you need to go next.



2 Get in a tangle on your way to the ammo point.



3 Squash a few zombies – it's all in a day's work.



4 Pick up the ammo and blow something up. It's easy.



The retail version features zombies with green blood, but a downloadable patch allows you to revert to red.

SUDDEN STRIKE

YOU AS WHOSE ARMY?



"One of the most beautiful WWII wargames to date" pc.ign.com

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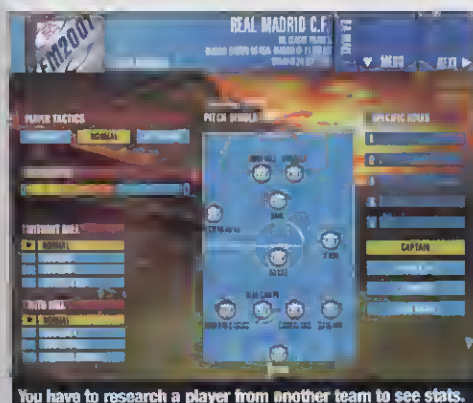
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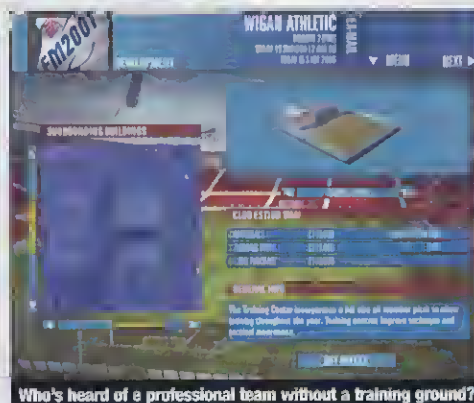
The matches are exceedingly boring. We dare you to sit through a whole one twice.



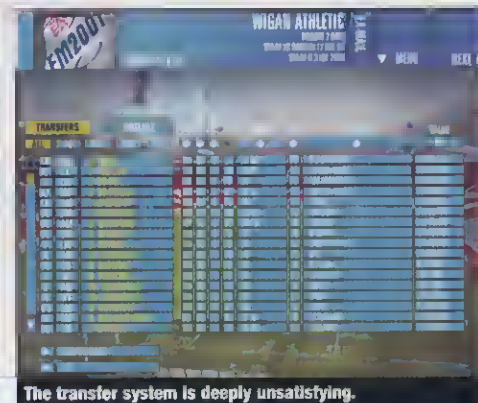
"Good tackler, commits few fouls." Oh, how we laughed...



You have to research a player from another team to see stats.



Who's heard of a professional team without a training ground?



The transfer system is deeply unsatisfying.

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2001

★ £34.99 • EA Sports • Out now

To be a manager nothing you say should make any sense. That's why Mark Hill seemed the perfect choice to do this review

We have been accused of blind partiality towards the *Championship Manager* series, dismissing all pretenders without ever giving them a real chance. But that's just the result of our love for a near perfect game, one which we play constantly, when other classics like *Half-Life* or *System Shock 2* have come and gone and are put away on the shelves. It's also the result of the inadequacy of most other titles, unable to recreate the pure magic and palpable realism of the Eidos cash-cow. If you think about it, football managing games are an incredibly niche market. The same people who point their finger and snigger at Japanese people engrossed in dancing games and school-dating RPGs go and spend hours bidding for players that will never go to their clubs, studiously examining the stats of their youth squad and gritting their teeth as text on the screen informs them they

have conceded yet another goal. But we just can't help ourselves – we love it.

STARS IN THEIR EYES

It's no wonder every competitor does its best to offer the one thing *Champ Man* doesn't have: a proper match engine. Of course, this misses the point that the matches are usually secondary to the experience and, most importantly, it's impossible at this time to recreate a football match with complex tactics in full 3D glory. So is *Football Manager 2001* doomed to failure from the

“There are seven countries included, loads of 3D rendered stadiums you can look at and four different match modes”

start? Well, not necessarily. EA seem to be taking up the challenge quite seriously, aiming to provide some of the depth of *CM* while showing matches using the *FA Premier League STARS* engine. The game also comes

IN PERSPECTIVE

No, we won't stop harping on about *Championship Manager*. There's a reason for its success. But if you want something more arcadey, this is it.

Championship Manager 99/00
Football Manager 2001

with its own editor, so the hardcore fans can update the latest transfers and even mess around with kits. There are seven countries included, totalling 20 leagues, loads of 3D rendered stadiums you can look at and

four different match modes (full, highlights, fastview and result). Elsewhere, it's the typical array of features: training, which can be given to your assistant manager, stadium expansion, building development and the EA-mail

system keeping you up to date with everything that's happening.

KETCHUP FOOTBALL

But play it for any length of time and you soon start to see the cracks appearing. First off, the chairman offers you the choice of three goals to achieve, with more money meaning more is expected. Strangely, this means that even if you're one of the top clubs in the world you can get away with just qualifying for a European Championship within three years for just slightly less money than having to win the league. No matter how big you are you still need to build a training centre, which is plain stupid. And since when does a coach set the price of the season tickets, with no indication of the usual price?

The stats for the players are plain wrong, the transfer system is as bad as ever and just selecting your squad for a match can be a headache. As for the matches, the full 3D game looks like a third division kick around, with an Arsenal vs Juventus match having players bumping into each other and stumbling the ball over the line. The fastview is boring and useless. The option to boost your

players is an interesting gimmick but needs more work, as does the whole interface.

FM 2001 tries to tread that fine middle ground, offering more depth and complexity for those who want it and letting average gamers get on with it without having to worry, but it's just that it doesn't quite work. At least EA realise that it is not going to overthrow the king with one game and that it'll need to work on this series constantly. For now, it has taken a step in the right direction, however small that step may be. **PCZ**

TECH SPECS

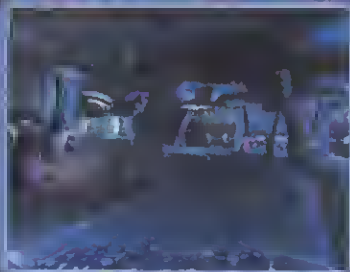
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233
Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A 3D card improves the matches

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS 3D matches • Data editor
• Email system
DOWNERS Same old problems • Matches are dull • Stats not quite right

67 *Champ Man* keeps a clean sheet. Again

SET PHASERS™ TO FRAG



The Quake III Arena™ engine provides detailed, curved surfaces aboard Borg cubes and other beautifully-rendered ships.



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FA PREMIER LEAGUE STARS 2001

★ £34.99 • EA Sports • Out now

With the start of the new football season imminent, what better way to spend your £35? Carlos Ruiz considers his options

As you'd no doubt expect, the coding team behind *Stars 2001* had the rights to use every club, player, kit, sponsor and stadium within the English Premier League. And as sure as eggs is eggs, they've done exactly that. Yet the tact that they've unashamedly blessed Fabien Barthez with a full head of brown hair suggests that the toolhardy bunch were either displaying a complete lack of basic football knowledge, or spending more time in the local watering hole than was strictly necessary.

In true EA tradition, however, they've ensured that the game plays very similarly to the original *FA Premier League Stars* (PCZ #81, 73 per cent). The Stars system itself, with which

categories (pace, shot strength, tackling, etc) for each player in your team. Alternatively, Stars can be saved up in order to buy new players.

To add a bit of fun to each individual match, the computer even gives



Don't ask.

meter wrong will result in either a weak or inaccurate shot.

And believe it or not, performing a through ball is almost guaranteed to relieve you of possession. If the ball actually manages to find the desired player before the opposition picks it up, the player in question will usually tatter and surrender the ball.

There are other gripes, but to be fair, *Stars 2001* does do the Premier League some justice.

The tootball is indeed end-to-end stuff, and passing on the whole is pleasingly efficient and smooth. Quick interchanges can be played with relative ease,

even in a tight area such as around the opposition penalty box, and this makes for a fairly decent match of soccer once you've mastered the game's deficiencies.

However, it is far from the complete package, and chances are you won't feel like playing it for the duration of the season, especially on the hardest difficulty setting. The two-player mode provides some extra appeal but, on the whole, *Stars 2001* is a tad shallow and lacking in many areas. **CW**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200
Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** At least a 300MHz processor, with 64Mb of RAM and a decent graphics card

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS It's the Premiership! • All the latest clubs, players and kits • Sky Sports commentary • Smooth and flowing football
DOOWNERS Far too many flaws • Not a lot of depth in play • It won't even save your changes to the options menu

65 Stick to 'proper' FIFA games



Free kicks are still almost impossible to score from.



No FIFA-style extravagant goal celebrations here.



Thirty-two yards out? You'll be lucky.



I'd keep my eye on the ball if I were you, mate.

“The whole Stars idea is quite poorly fashioned and serves only to sidetrack the tediousness of the season option”

you can improve your squad by playing well over the course of a season, hasn't changed much either. Once Stars have been awarded to you, they can be used to upgrade a number of

IN PERSPECTIVE

We can see few reasons why *Stars 2001* deserves your money more than *FIFA 2000* or *Euro 2000*. Both of the latter games are technically superior with less niggling faults, and can be picked up for less than £20. Remember that *FIFA 2001* will appear on the horizon shortly, but don't expect any ground-breaking changes to the tried and tested *FIFA* formula.

FA Premier League Stars 2001

FIFA 2000

Euro 2000

ON THE TURF

Stars 2001 will take a bit of getting used to if you're more familiar with the 'proper' *FIFA* series, with several changes having been made to the control system and the way players behave. The first obvious difference is that shots at goal have to be charged up (via a power meter) for a good second or two if you want to score anything other than tap-ins. This is the last thing you'll want to get your head around after you've dodged the entire detence, since judging the



An explosion. Fancy that.



You can morph into different vehicles if you need, or indeed want to.



Try to take all these on at once and you may die quickly – and painfully.

INFESTATION

★ £29.99 • Ubi Soft • Out September

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card **WE SAY** Average specs for an average game

From the developers of *Elite* comes the tale of one buggy's lone fight against an extraterrestrial menace. Yes, you in your motorised steed get to participate in a 3D shooter of extreme averageness. It's not all bad news, though. The way you can upgrade your buggy is rather interesting as you're given different weapons and abilities, which see you evolving into a... oh, forget it, it is all bad news.

It's the manoeuvrability of the vehicle that's the main problem. If you drive too close to the enemy they'll start to fire at you. But can you skilfully dodge the oncoming barrage and fire back? No, you have to either stay still and take it or tediously wheel around keeping your target locked on while they constantly whiffle down your energy. But having a strafe mode on a buggy would be stupid, wouldn't it? Not as stupid as getting blown up by a surprisingly precise, relentless gun turret while you move

around like a toddler on a tricycle. It's even worse with mobile enemies. Hell, just stay out of range and shoot rockets at them. They probably won't notice.

Get a couple of upgrades and gain some tolerance of the controls and things balance out a little. Well, things might if it wasn't for the rest of the game. If anything was a model of dullness through over-familiarity, *Infestation* would be it. It's not that there's anything awful about it, it's just that it's hard to get excited or enthusiastic about the whole experience. There's just nothing about the game which makes it stand out. It's the gaming equivalent of *Emmerdale*. And multiplayer? Playing with those controls? No thanks.

If this is the kind of thing Frontier Developments is putting out at the moment, it's a brave man who doesn't cross his fingers doubly hard for *Elite 4*. *Infestation* may not be a total stinker but it just doesn't cut it.

James Lyon

PCZ VERDICT

50%

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC III

★ £19.99 • 300 • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Will run on virtually anything

Was it really two years ago that the 'original' *Heroes of Might and Magic III* was reviewed and got a hallowed 78% (PCZ#76)? So what's changed since then? Well the answer to that is actually sod all. In all fairness this is really an add-on pack to the original, although 3DO has included the original game with it, so if you didn't give it a try last year then you can now.

However, we were expecting a bit more. It has been over a year since the first release, and the only difference

we can see between the first release and this one is a few new backgrounds. The gameplay is identical and the graphics are virtually unchanged.

The resource management system is also identical to the earlier incarnation. Simply grab gold and resources, upgrade your cities, get new troops and fight. No big shakes either.

There were a lot of fans of *HOMMIII* in the office, and an add-on pack was expected at the end of last year. But this is now too little too late for die-hard fans (although any fix has got to be a good thing). Games such as *Panzer General 3D* have demonstrated what turn-based strategy games can do, even on lower-spec machines. Graphics and

gameplay have moved on apace and this game now looks quite dated.

It is not all doom and gloom, though. The game is still as frighteningly addictive as ever, and 3DO has definitely made it a lot more difficult this time around (expect numerous curses when you get defeated in a dead-cert win situation). It's also priced at under £20 which means it isn't going to break the bank either. Want more of the same? Give it a go.

Dan Emery

PCZ VERDICT

69%



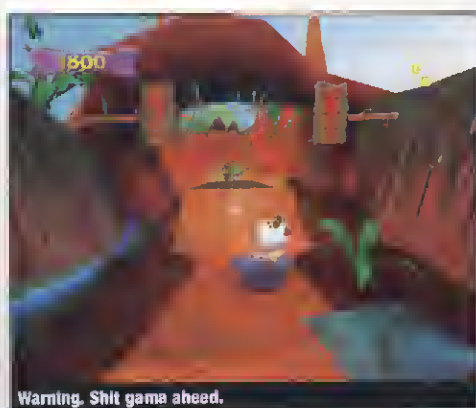
Very little has changed since the original version came out more than a year ago.



Although it still retains its addictive qualities, the game is starting to look a little rough around the edges.



I don't know about you, but these guys are really giving me the horn.



THE FLINTSTONES BEDROCK BOWLING

★ £19.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM
SUPPORTS 3D card **WE SAY** Yabba Dabba Poo

PCZONE PANTS

Weird. That's one way to describe this release (crap would be another) and it gets surreal the moment you put the CD into your PC. Despite the fact that the full install is only 180Mb, *Flintstones Bowling* takes what feels like a few hours to install, and while the progress bar slowly fills up you're treated to a tune. Not the *Flintstones* theme tune though, but something that sounds like a hippy drum-in at the Womad festival.

Once it's installed you're presented with the money shot. Because *Flintstones Bedrock Bowling* isn't a bowling game at all, at least not in the traditional sense. Instead you have to guide your favourite character down a number of toboggan runs, picking up crystals and knocking over pins. This continues until sleep comes a-knocking.

The only controls you have to worry about are the four directions. That's it. And on one of the levels you don't even have to worry about that because the path is so narrow you automatically pick everything up anyway. You can switch to the hard level and lose the Invisible barriers, but why bother?

Ubi Soft might point out that this release is aimed at kids, but that's no excuse for a shoddy piece of garbage

like this. Anyone over the age of six is going to see through this before it's finished installing. Anyone younger is going to be far better off with one of the many game/educational titles that are on the shelves of every high-street shop.

What's worse, the packaging doesn't give any indication that anyone who can crawl is going to be too old for the game. It's plastered all over the new releases section at our local EB shop and from the box it looks just like a 3D platform game. It's not. It's a bad joke.

Dave Woods

PCZVERDICT

16%



MIDNIGHT RACING

★ £19.99 • Brightstar Entertainment • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P111 Memory 32Mb RAM
SUPPORTS 3D card **WE SAY** Avoid at all costs

Racing, surprisingly enough, at midnight. An interesting concept (note the heavy sarcasm), but there's precious little else in this nocturnal jaunt to keep you occupied. The childish simple controls consist of the arrow keys and the occasional space bar tap to get you pointing in the right direction. The lack of reverse hinders your movement, making easily escapable positions a major feat to get out of, and this is going to happen a lot: every car drives like a brick and is about as responsive.

The AI should definitely have been patched up before release, in this case it's probably an acronym for Artificially Incompetent. Not only do pedestrian motorists seem to take having their rear wheels pushed through their front windscreen with a pinch of salt, but they're also liable to drive on the wrong side of the road for the fun of it. (The car-crushing aspect of the game is probably the only redeeming factor.) Your opponents aren't much better and appear to follow the rule of accelerating without trying to steer, in the hope that they will complete the track on a trial and error basis.

Want more? Try the ethereal landscapes that your car can pass through, from the horrendously 2D foliage to the thick bridge-supporting girders. Or the solid blocks of air that stop your car dead in the middle of the road.

If high-speed capers down challenging courses are what makes you happy, then fork out for *Colin McRae Rally* (now on budget) or *Le Mans 24 Hours* (which can be played at night and during the day!). Or, if the car-crushing side of this game is the more appealing, then may I point you in the direction of *Midtown Madness* or the third instalment in the *Carmageddon* series, but please stay away from this.

Alex Ashby

PCZVERDICT

25%



ARCATERA

★ £19.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** A great deal of patience

PCZONE PANTS

This is one of the most entertaining games we've had in the office for quite some time. The entire **PC ZONE** team huddled around one of the office PCs for the best part of an hour watching this game, even though there were more pressing matters at hand. Laugh? We nearly died. *Arcatera* has the most hilarious intro sequences ever seen in a PC game, bar none. Example: the female magic user gasps in horror as her guardian is killed in front of her. Worried that she might be next, she hides under a blanket on the floor. The assassin searches the room and finds several items, but not our heroine who is standing right beside him (classic scene from *The Life Of Brian* springs to mind: "We've found a spoon sir"). Two years later our heroine emerges from under the blanket, announcing it's time she got over it and perhaps she should do some adventuring. Upon 'searching' the front of a castle she comes across in a nearby town, she finds not useful items or loot but, er, some people. Castle guards appear out of nowhere as it by magic. It's classic stuff, complete with comedy accents, and it wasn't for the fact the humour is completely unintentional this game would go down in comedy history.

Sadly, the entertainment stops there. The game itself is utterly awful. Five years out of date graphically, and sporting one of the worst interfaces we've ever seen, *Arcatera* fails to impress on every level imaginable. The combat is spectacularly bad, with characters missing their enemies completely, despite the fact they're right on top of them, and a user-unfriendly spell system simply adds to the confusion in the heat of battle. Not quite a classic then, but you'd probably guessed that by now.

Chris Anderson

PC2VERDICT

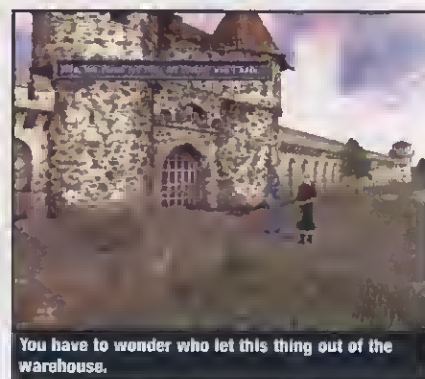
12%



Witty and riveting dialogue does not feature heavily in *Arcatera*.



He'll never find her under that blanket.



You have to wonder who let this thing out of the warehouse.



Go on play it, we dare you.

MIGHT AND MAGIC VIII

★ £29.99 • 300 • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 375Mb of hard-drive space **WE SAY** Yes that will work, but you will wish it hadn't

PCZONE PANTS

There is a very small group of individuals who claim to like *Might And Magic VII*. We hated it. Abysmal graphics and archaic gameplay are never going to impress us, but we do not hold grudges. What's past is past. So, we start afresh with this latest offering, *Might And Magic VIII*. We have no preconceptions; we forgive 3DO its previous sins, let's move on and see how it fares.

Abysmal graphics and archaic gameplay are never going to impress us... no... wait... I said that in the opening paragraph, but yes you've guessed, *Might And Magic VIII* is every bit as abysmal as its miserable predecessor. But somehow it's even worse this time

round. Advances in gameplay and graphics technology have moved on yet further, while *Might And Magic* stands perfectly still, caught in its own little time warp. It there are differences between the last instalment of the series and the latest one then they are hidden away out of sight, which is ironic since that is exactly what's going to happen to this thing once the review is finished.

If you are still interested at this point, the premise of the game is this: gather a band of merry adventurers and travel the land in search of quests and items, gaining experience as you go along. Fighters, magic users, healers, *MMVIII* has the lot. What it doesn't have is the faintest sniff of originality or panache and if you go anywhere near it you are clearly as mad as a balloon. And to the little band of *Might and Magic* followers who will no doubt lap this trash up, please don't write in to tell us how great it is, no please, don't.

David Stark



Hilariously bad, well, it made us laugh.

PC2VERDICT

9%

BUSINESS TYCOON

★ £19.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium Memory 16Mb
ALSO REQUIRES SVGA video card **WE SAY** Sounds about right to us

For some strange inexplicable reason, someone, somewhere is still regularly buying games like this. There's no other way to explain why development companies keep churning out titles which would have looked dated six years ago, and *Business Tycoon* is the latest one to drop off this conveyor belt of sub-medocrity.

Placed in charge of a small company which produces either aircraft, cars or computers, it's your task to transform a corporation from a local business to a world leader. This can be done in a number of ways. Through a series of menu screens, you can send your sales executives around one of the four available maps, spreading the word about your products and researching the needs and wants of individual communities. Employing engineers allows you to develop new technologies, which will enhance your products and make them more desirable to the paying public. You can also take on marketers who help to boost the image of your company and goods.

Put like this it doesn't sound too bad, but believe us, it is. *Business Tycoon* boils down to nothing more than a set of repetitive tasks. Upgrading your buildings, researching market strategies and developing products is about as exciting as an accountant's spreadsheet, while the dated graphics are just as dull. However, you've got to be extremely prudent when balancing the books, especially on the higher levels, and it's this which saves *Business Tycoon* from plunging into the depths of *PC ZONE* Pansness. It's also extremely difficult to master. While easier levels break you in gently, the harder ones require you to have the brain of a business genius if you're to have any chance of succeeding.

If you don't mind its limitations, poor graphics and repetitive gameplay, then you'll probably find *Business Tycoon* fun for at least a few days, maybe even a week if you're really keen. Although it's certainly challenging enough, most of you probably won't enjoy it for long enough to warrant spending £20 on it.

Martin Korda

PCZVERDICT

36%



I think I've worked out why I'm not selling any cars. Just look at it.



Menus don't get a lot more exciting than this.

BANG! GUNSHIP ELITE

★ £19.99 • Red Storm • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 2Mb SVGA video card **WE SAY** That'll do just fine for this old codger

PC games have a disturbing tendency to cause burnout. There are only so many stat-heavy sims you can take before crawling back into bed and begging for forgiveness.

Thankfully, there are alternatives like this. Devoid of complex physics, navigational plotting and ship-classification encyclopaedias, *Bang!*'s goals are humble. Space combat's the ticket, only minus the titanic manuals that *X: Beyond The Frontier* and *Independence War* tout. Stripped of the detailed features anal-retentive astronauts demand, the title's free to bask in its brainless glory.

Rule number one: if it moves, shoot it. Rules two to ten: see number one. Light spacecraft, heavy freighters and flagships dance a deadly jig as you swivel crosshairs and gun turrets in their direction. Once locked onto a target, all you've got to do is blast it out of the sky and stare vacantly at the flaming debris before moving onto the next victim.

Mission objectives are assigned, but it's easy to go AWOL. No self-respecting captain balks at a dogfight when the next best alternative's to escort a convoy of clunky supply barges. Accordingly, the weapon systems, including flux beams, stasis cannons and hellfire launchers, perform way beyond the call of duty.

Funnily enough, shallow gameplay couldn't be more rewarding. Mind-blowing 3D explosions, sprays of coloured light, and panoramic views of planets hanging in the void are standard issue. Pilots intelligent enough to bypass the musically challenged briefings and skip right to the candy-coated action will find their zeal justified.

Progress, schmogress, *Bang!* operates on the same premise (or lack thereof) behind hits like *Galaga*. Put terrible voice acting, great graphics, huge guns and a license to kill into one title and you've got the gaming equivalent of an *Evil Dead* film. It may be shallow, but it's entertaining.

Scott Steinberg

PCZVERDICT

64%



Hey! No urinating out of the porthole!



Ghost in the machine.



Any last words, friend?

HOTDOG

the new movie magazine
issue 3 on sale July 27

iFG

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HOTDOG



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TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC



ACTION HALF-LIFE



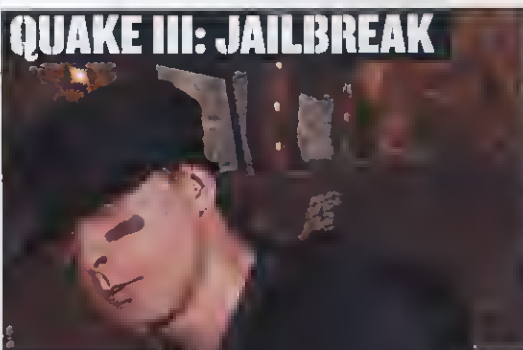
PHOTOGRAPHY Simon Clay

Ⓛ to R: Martin Korda (aka 'Nameless One'), Ⓜ Mark Hill (aka 'Leatherface'), Ⓟ Paul Presley (aka 'I R Baboon'),
Ⓡ Richie Shoemaker (aka 'Zapatero'), Ⓡ Dave Woods (aka 'Kid Unknown'), Ⓡ Chris Anderson (aka 'Unholy').

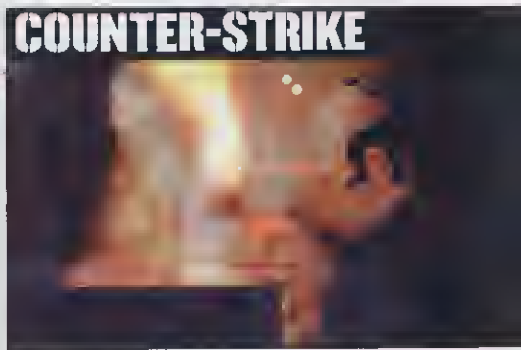
QUAKE III: FORTRESS



QUAKE III: JAILBREAK



COUNTER-STRIKE



The more things change, the more they stay the same. Except for the world of modifications in which existing games tend to get warped beyond all recognition. Luckily the end results are usually some of the most enjoyable games ever seen

GO GO GOING: Paul Presley

When you do something for love, it brings its own rewards. When you write your own vows at a wedding rather than go with the honour and obey crap, you'll be sure to leave the front row weeping, your bride with an adoring heart and an overlooked loophole that allows you to have several extra-marital affairs. When you run to your girlfriend's house through a torrential downpour just to say those three little words on her doorstep, you can be guaranteed a shag at the very least and pneumonia at the worst. And when you create a computer game, not for financial reward but for the love of the art, you're guaranteed the respect and admiration of millions of gamers world-wide. And a job at id.

The mods scene has exploded over the past year or so. What was once a small band of enthusiasts

creating the odd level or two for *Quake* deathmatches has turned into the breeding ground for game designers of the future. Now there are almost as many teams turning out mods to existing titles as there are professional game designers.

The biggest area of expansion has naturally been the first-person shooter. Ever since *Half-Life* redefined the FPS book in 1998, spirited amateurs have been trying to redefine it. Where this is most evident is with online play. The internet is the perfect medium for distributing these constantly updating and evolving add-ons, so it was only natural that the nature of their content would follow suit.

So, with that in mind, we take a look at five of the most popular FPS online mods available, pretend that the tour not called *Counter-Strike* even have a chance of winning, and take this opportunity to salute the gaming world's true unsung heroes. ➔

PCZONE SUPERTEST FPS MODS



A game designed for stand-offs.

ACTION HALF-LIFE

Dave: I first played this down at The Playing Fields and I couldn't really understand what was going on. It was basically regular deathmatch with realistic weapons. But then I played it some time later and

they'd added all these kicks and jumps and stuff.

Richie: Yeah, originally they were one of the more 'realistic' mods, back when they did it for *Quake II* I think it was. But then *Counter-Strike* took over that

crown, so they went a different route.

Mark: The Benny Hill route.

Dave: Full-on comedy.

Richie: Well it was always supposed to be a bit over the top – John Woo-style double pistols and the like. I think it was a good move for them because it would be impossible to take on *Counter-Strike* in the realism stakes and they have made it into a fun game.

Dave: The addition of bandages is also a good move. When you lose your health you slow down and you can either bandage yourself up to stop the bleeding or crawl away shooting, losing health as you go.

You'll keep losing health until you die otherwise.

Prezzer: You do? No wonder I kept dying.

Chris: It is really funny and the skins are hilarious but after about half an hour of it, the novelty begins to wear off. The comedy goes and then there's just a basic deathmatch game left.

Prezzer: Personally I could run around dressed as Odd-Job all day long. In the game too.

Mark: The combat isn't as good as it could be. It's an awful lot of running around stabbing and shooting wildly.

Richie: Well, there is still the touch of realism about it. You're supposed to use a bit of cunning as you play. It's not a full-on deathmatch mode.

Prezzer: Actually, I thought of all the games here it was the best for just pure deathmatching.

Dave: It's the only one for pure deathmatching. All the others are team games.

Mark: That doesn't really work as an argument does it Prezzer?

Prezzer: What I mean is all the others are specifically designed for large numbers of people. If you've only got a small number of people to play with it's far better than something like two-a-side *Team Fortress*.

Chris: It didn't feel like 'proper' deathmatch to me.

Prezzer: Why, because it didn't have the *Quake III* engine?

Chris: No, it just felt completely hectic and totally mad.

Prezzer: That is proper deathmatch.

Dave: It does seem more mad now. With the comedy skins and the bizarre death-throes when you kill someone. Although it wasn't funny the first time I played it. It was quite serious in fact.

Chris: Were you pissed at the time?

Martin: I'd have liked more control over the hand-to-hand

the glass dome away as you fall down. Great stuff. I just felt it had a very '70s funky Chinatown style to it. Personally I love that kind of thing. Walking around as Shaft...

Martin: You bad mother...

Dave: It's easy to learn the maps though. They're pretty small. You always know where to go to get the sniper rifle or the grenades.

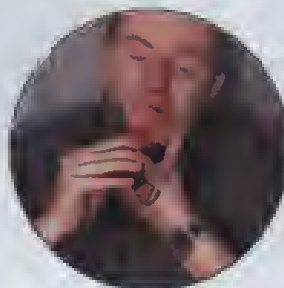
Prezzer: But that just emphasises the close-up, 'action' nature of the game.

Mark: It's not really designed for sniper rifles actually. Everyone moves too quickly for it to be effective.

Prezzer: I think the weapons are nicely balanced though. At first I

“I felt it had a very '70s funky Chinatown feel to it. I love that kind of thing. Walking around as Shaft...”

PREZZER ON ACTION HALF-LIFE



combat. It was too much 'charge and back off', 'charge and back off'.

Dave: Well the engine wasn't designed to be a beat 'em up.

Martin: They shouldn't try to make it into one then.

Mark: There are some good maps in the game. Like the one with the swimming pool at the bottom.

Prezzer: Oh yeah, where you can dive off the top of a root and shoot

thought the weapons were a bit limited, just a few pistols and the like. But that just made finding the shotguns and the grenades all the more special. It's an odd way to do it, but I think it works.

Martin: The guns felt real as well. They're hard to aim and require you to be careful with the bullets.

Richie: One thing about it, the 'Action' mod definitely influenced *Counter-Strike*. *Action Quake* was perhaps the first realistic mod to appear. So that's in its favour.



ACTION HALF-LIFE

Half-Life deathmatching as seen through the eyes of legendary action-movie meister John Woo. Lots of funky seventies references, lots of funky two-gun action, lots of jumps, rolls, kicks and stunts. When regular deathmatch no longer gets the veins a-pumping, *Action Half-Life* should do the job.

DEVELOPER	A-Team
GAME	Half-Life
WEBSITE	http://ahl.action-web.net/
PRICE	Free download

TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC

Prezzer: What version of this are we up to now?

Richie: 1.5.

Prezzer: And how long has that been out?

Richie: About a year.

Mark: The reason they haven't updated it since is that no one's really playing it anymore, not since *Quake III* and, more recently, *Counter-Strike* came out.

Dave: That's not entirely true. There are dedicated fans still playing it constantly. Just not as many.

Richie: Again, a victim of the all-conquering *Counter-Strike*.

Dave: I'm in two minds about the classes system. You get heavy weapons guys who can shoot but hardly move, or you get scouts who can run fast but barely shoot.

Mark: Or snipers who can just sit there picking people off.

Dave: It's a nice idea but I just think you get half a game really.

Chris: No, I disagree. I think it works really well when you get a well-balanced force. But you do need large teams to really play it right.

Prezzer: It says on the maps when you load them up 'recommended for 8-16 players'. It's definitely designed with large numbers in mind.

Martin: Everyone just picks the heavy weapons guy though and becomes practically invulnerable.

Chris: But that's where you'd have your snipers taking them out from a distance.

Mark: I still don't want to be a person who just has one role. Who can only do one thing. It doesn't let you adapt to changes in circumstance during a match.

Chris: But that's what team play is all about. Working as a unit rather than an individual.

Dave: I don't like being restricted to just one weapon throughout.

Prezzer: That's not true. You do get several weapons with each character.

Dave: Yeah, but you're still limited. Even in something like *Counter-Strike* where you start with just one gun, you can drop it and pick up someone else's further on.

Chris: But that's not what this game is all about. It's strategic. You have one team versus another, guarding bases or capturing command points. It's a game of strategy. It's not as pointless as just running around

the place shooting everyone that moves.

Dave: "It's a game of strategy," says Chris, the person who took the heavy gun all the time and just stood there mowing everyone down.

Chris: That was my strategy. And it worked thank you very much. That's how you play, you have your heavy gunners up front, your medics behind him keeping him alive.

Mark: Who wants to be a tucking medic???

Dave: It's geffing close to *EverQuest* territory here. I'll be a poffer and go around selling pots to people.

Everyone: (Laughs)

Dave: It is a bit like a role-playing action game in some ways. You get clans who get together and have people who just pick one class and stick with it, get really good in their particular field. Which is great for some people. Personally, I want to be able to do a bit of everything as the need arises. I want to be able to run and shoot and jump and everything else.

Prezzer: I want, I want.

Martin: It makes you feel like you actually belong to a large unit though. As though you have more of a purpose in the game than just making up numbers. It prevents glory boys from just running off and doing everything on their own



while the less good players don't get a chance to play.

Mark: A normal person would be able to do a bit of everything though.

Prezzer: Thing is, you're criticising it based on things it doesn't want to offer.

Chris: It's a proper team game. The point is to capture command points or flags rather than just kill people. You have to think in a different way. Unlike *Counter-Strike*, *TFC* really is a proper team game.

Dave: What do you mean "unlike



Choosing the right class is all important.

Counter-Strike? It may not be as deeply strategic as *Team Fortress*, but *Counter-Strike* is perhaps the ultimate team game.

Chris: It's not.

Dave: Of course it is.

Mark: I don't know how you can say that, Chris.

Chris: Ultimately your whole role in *Counter-Strike* is just to shoot someone in the head. *Team Fortress* is very different to that.

Mark: Thing is, when you're playing *Counter-Strike* you can believe that you're playing in real-life circumstances. With *Team*

people who don't want to die after one or two shots. If they want a good fun game where they can keep respawning, trying out different roles and fulfilling different objectives.

Mark: You do have to work at it to learn the maps and the roles though. It's not for beginners.

Richie: It is good for people with variable connection speeds. If you have high-speed connections you can play as snipers or spies. If you suffer from lag you can be a scout or a heavy weapons guy because you don't need accuracy. That really contributed to its success.

Prezzer: Are you looking forward to *Team Fortress 2*, Dave?

Dave: I can't wait.

Prezzer: Why though? Surely it's going to have all the same things you don't like about this.

Dave: I think this is just a taster for what *Team Fortress 2* will offer. Hopefully it will work around a lot of these things.

Mark: Thing is, the engine for *TF2* will have been built specifically for that game, which will help.

Dave: Also, once *Team Fortress 2* arrives we'll probably all have

high-speed Internet connections, there'll be voice communication between players...

Martin: That'll just be clogged up with everyone arguing over the sniper rifle at the start.

Richie: What'll be really good is the commander option. Some guy sitting at the back, behind the front lines, watching everyone on the map, directing their actions.

Dave: And everyone else ignoring him and doing their own thing.

"You feel like you belong to a large unit. It prevents the glory boys from doing everything"

MARTIN ON *TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC*

Fortress it feels too much like some kind of fantasy world where people are certain classes and that's all they can be.

Prezzer: But that is like the real world. The military is filled with different specialists fulfilling different roles.

Dave: But it just doesn't feel realistic. If you have loads of armour you can take like 60 bullets to the head and not die. It's cartoon realism almost. Don't get me wrong. I do like it. I think it's an enjoyable game. But it's just not for me. I prefer something slightly more realistic.

Martin: It's the team game for



TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC

The first of the truly great team-based mods. Pick a specialist class (medic, pyro, explosives, sniper, etc) and join your team in a race to capture the flag, keep control of certain map areas, or escort VIPs. One of the most popular mods around, with the notable exception of *Counter-Strike*.

DEVELOPER	Team Fortress Software
GAME	Half-Life
WEBSITE	http://www.planetfortress.com/
PRICE	Free download



The team play element is still just as important.

← **QUAKE III: FORTRESS**

Dave: Well it's much the same game as *TFC*, just with a different engine. I didn't feel as though the *Quake III* engine really lends itself to this kind of gameplay.

Prezzer: It's better suited to a more frantic style of play. It's a deathmatch engine basically.

Dave: It's a bit too fast for *Team Fortress*. The scout moves like lightning.

Prezzer: Plus you can still zoom in on every weapon which

makes a mockery of sniping.

Richie: It's only been out a short while and they're still working on a lot of it. I think it looks superb in the *Quake III* engine though. The graphics are excellent.

Chris: It does look better than *Half-Life*'s version, but it just doesn't feel quite as good. In *Half-Life* it looked like you were in proper environments for doing this sort of thing.

Here it just looked like, "Oh we're in a *Quake III* level trying to play *TFC*." But the problem is with the engine, not the mod. I've only ever seen one *Quake III* level that looks even vaguely different and that is *Mindfield*.

Mark: I prefer *TF* here because I feel the combat works better.

Prezzer: Eh? How can it work better here than there when it's basically the same game?

Mark: Well, for one thing, the rocket launcher in *Quake III* is so much better than the one in *Half-Life*. It's made for a deathmatch environment. It's made for shooting people

in the head, rather than the other one which is for killing aliens.

Dave: What's the difference between killing humans and killing aliens?

Prezzer: The colour of the blood. I wouldn't be surprised if it went to some mod developers and said, "Listen guys, can you make us a *Team Fortress* game because we're losing big time to *Half-Life*." It feels like a political move.

Martin: You really are paranoid.

Prezzer: What I mean is this. *Half-Life* is this omnipresent force in the industry now. It's always there in the background waiting. First the original game came out and everyone went nuts over it. Then *Unreal Tournament* arrived and everyone briefly switched to that. Then *Half-Life* comes out with *Team Fortress* and everyone ditched *UT*. *Quake III* briefly distracted everyone again until *Counter-Strike* came along and everyone's gone back. *Half-Life* is always there and everyone else keeps trying to beat it and fails.

Dave: It's unfair to compare *Quake III: Fortress* with the others though, because it is still early.

Richie: It is fairly new, but it's already pretty good and I can see it getting a lot better.

Chris: I just think the nature of the graphics engine is going to prevent it from getting much better. *Quake III*'s limitations on doing outdoor environments doesn't help and that's one of the best things about the *TFC* maps.

Mark: The way it should go is not

to take on *TFC* head-on but to try and do some kind of futuristic version of the game. That could be great. It could be like a *Starship Troopers* sort of thing.

Dave: Yeah, it should branch out and offer classes more suited to the *Quake III* engine.

Richie: It's like all the other *Team Fortresses* coming out for other games such as *Soldier Of Fortune* and *Unreal*. They'll all copy the

Dave: So you might as well have futuristic weapons in that case.

Prezzer: Like I said, everyone is constantly trying to ape *Half-Life*. Whether they can pull it off or not.

Dave: It still looks good though, and it's not a bad game. It's just that there are better games out there. Trouble is, there are so many mods out there now. When it first kicked off there were only a couple and everyone was wowed by this brand new way of doing things. Now there are hundreds and it's coming down to just two or three that are fucking brilliant, and the rest are being left behind.

Mark: I don't like the fact that there are hundreds of mods. It

"It should try and do a futuristic version of the game. It could be like a *Starship Troopers* thing"

MARK ON *QUAKE III: FORTRESS*



dilutes things too much.

Dave: I do. The more the better.

The fact that hundreds of people are working on them is fantastic.

Richie: It's mods that are making these games as popular as they are. *Team Fortress* and *Counter-Strike* have kept *Half-Life* alive.

Dave: If not for them, no one would be playing it all now. When you finished the single-player game, that was it. No one wants to play deathmatch *Half-Life*.

Richie: Huh? Deathmatch *Half-Life* is brilliant.

Mark: Yeah, shut up Dave.

Prezzer: Shall we take a vote? Who thinks Dave is a twat?

Everyone: (Frenzied agreement)

QUAKE III: FORTRESS

The *Quake III* engine gives the old team-based gameplay a shot. Maybe not quite as good as the original *TFC*, but still a damn fine attempt if you're a die-hard Quaker looking for something a little different. At the moment it's early days for this one and it promises to get better as time goes on.

DEVELOPER	Q3F Team
GAME	<i>Quake III Arena</i>
WEBSITE	http://www.q3f.com/
PRICE	Free download

QUAKE III: JAILBREAK

Dave: Chris loves this game.

Chris: I do love it. For pure fun, nothing can beat it. I'd rather have the entertainment value of *Jailbreak* over the atmosphere of *Counter-Strike*.

(sharp intakes of breath all round)

Prezzer: Controversy from *ZONE* editor shocker.

Mark: I call for a vote of confidence.

Richie: Impeach! Impeach!

Chris: It's more my kind of game. Brilliant fun.

Dave: It is a good game, no doubt. It's a really simple idea and it works really well. It's a lot like Capture The Flag really. You either go and attack the other side or you defend the jail and make sure no one escapes.

Mark: Part of why it works so well is the design of the maps. There are two or three that come with it that are excellent. I mean, there are some that are terrible, that you just wouldn't want to play. But if you get a well-balanced map it's superb.

Dave: They're easy enough to do really. You just need two sides.

Chris: It's a million times better than Capture The Flag and I'll tell you why. When you play CTF, every now and then you get a message saying someone's got your flag but you don't know where the hell they are. The brilliant thing about *Jailbreak* is that you know when someone's in jail, and the enemy know when someone's in jail. So you're running back to get your team-mate out, they're running back to defend their jail and everyone knows where they're going. It's brilliant. It's just so much more of a team game.

Dave: Also, the different ways of dying, the executions I mean. They're hilarious.

Mark: That's the thing. It's probably the only other mod here apart from *Counter-Strike* in which 'dying' really pisses you off. It really has a consequence.

Martin: It prevents that kind of gung-ho attitude that ruins a lot of traditional deathmatch games.

Mark: It just makes it all the more interesting.

Prezzer: Which is why I hate the

damn game. Because I'm crap at *Quake III*! I'm almost always in jail within about five seconds of starting. It came as a real shock to discover there was more to each map than a small closed off area with no doors.

Martin: But that's because it's much more of a team-based game than it appears. If you run off by yourself you won't achieve anything. You have to rely on your team-mates to get you out of jail and you have to work together to stop you getting the shit blown out of you.

Richie: Actually, apart from getting people out of jail, I don't think there is that much team-based gameplay to it really. You don't really set off in packs or use your buddies like you do in *TFC* or *Counter-Strike*.

Chris: You should do though, if you want to win a game.

Richie: You should, but you don't. It's too fast-paced for that.



Chris: It depends who you play with. I've played it online when there have been well-organised, large teams on each side. You get players who don't move from the front of their jail, guarding it with their lives and others who really do work together to hunt down the enemy. It's almost like an entirely different game when that happens. It's so much cooler.

Prezzer: What annoyed me about it was the lack of bots. I can't always get a good online connection, so I would like to have been able to play it by myself with large teams of bots. The main *Quake III* engine had bots, why not *Jailbreak*?

Richie: Probably because it's a beta at the moment. I expect there will be bots in the later releases. They're on the game's



Jailbreak: Chris's favourite, but the rest of the team don't seem quite so convinced.

menu after all.

Mark: The thing with bots and mods is that the ones in the initial games aren't designed to work with the mods that come afterwards.

Prezzer: It's just annoying that's all. I'd like to play large team-based games like this, but I just can't afford to spend hours online each time.

Dave: Come off it. I've seen some of your invoices.

“The best ideas are usually the simplest ones. If you've got 20 minutes to kill it's perfect”

CHRIS ON *QUAKE III: JAILBREAK*

Chris: No one does that anyway.

Mark: Of course they do!

Prezzer: Loads of people do. That was the big joy of *Unreal Tournament*, the fact that it had intelligent bots who could follow orders and work as a team.

Chris: I'd rather play with unintelligent humans like this lot. (waves hand around table)

Prezzer: Yeah, well you're spoilt for choice around here, aren't you?

Richie: Like all these things though, *Jailbreak* and *Quake III: Fortress* are still pretty early on in their development cycle, but the *Jailbreak* concept has been around for a while now. It was in *Quake II* for instance.

Dave: Yeah, it shows. It's polished. It knows its job. It's just a really simple idea that works really well.

Chris: The best ideas usually are

the simplest ones. Rather than something like *TFC* or a really big game of *Counter-Strike*, if you've just got 20 minutes to kill it's perfect. Instant, highly playable action.

Dave: The real reason you love it though is because you fire up the game, within ten seconds you're in jail and then you can have a cigarette.

Chris: That's not true... any more. It was in the beginning, but I'm much better now.

Dave: Yeah, now you've learnt how to camp. It's fucking annoying.

Chris: (Laughs maniacally)

Mark: At first you were complaining the whole time about people camping, now look at you.

Martin: Mr Buttlins.

Chris: If you can't beat them, join them.

Richie: I think a *Jailbreak* mode of gameplay within a *TFC* mod would be great.

Chris: Nah, it'd be too confusing. Maybe just the different character classes would be OK.

Dave: And more realistic weapons. You could have like explosives people who could blow the jail doors off.

Prezzer: You see that's the main problem I've got

with the game, and it's the same one I have with *Quake III*. The whole engine doesn't appeal to me.

The whole space marine, futuristic thing doesn't appeal to me. And for that same reason, *Jailbreak* doesn't appeal to me because it just looks and feels like the same thing. The mod itself doesn't do enough to appeal.

Dave: I've actually gone off it somewhat since *Counter-Strike*.

Chris: Everything you're saying now Prez, I was saying when I first played it.

Prezzer: Oh God, I've looked into my future and I've seen myself turning into Chris. Scary.



QUAKE III: JAILBREAK

An alternative to straight *QIII* deathmatching, *Jailbreak* is much more of a team-based affair requiring you to free your fellow convicts before they're executed. Clearly, this is Chris's favourite online game, but if the *Quake III* engine doesn't particularly appeal to you it may not be enough to sway your decision.

DEVELOPER	Team Reaction
GAME	<i>Quake III Arena</i>
WEBSITE	http://q3jb.teamreaction.com/
PRICE	Free download



Guess he took too long.

COUNTER-STRIKE

Prezzer: Right, let's have Chris start with this one so that when we do eventually kill him we can point to the tape as proof of mitigating circumstances.

Chris: Why does everyone assume I don't like *Counter-Strike*? I do.

Prezzer: Because whenever you play it you sit there moaning and bitching away. "Oh why do they all look the same?"

Martin: "Why isn't anyone helping me out?"

Dave: "Bang. Oh for fuck's sake where did that come from?"

I'm dead again."

Richie: "I hate this game!"

Chris: If I didn't like it I wouldn't play it so much. I like it, but I just think *Jailbreak* is more exhilarating. What I don't like about it is that it can often be confusing. It's not always easy to tell who you should be shooting.

Prezzer: That was certainly true for Martin today. How many times did you kill me? Normally it tells you to stop when you're shooting a friend but you just kept piling the bullets in there.

Martin: It was dark and you were wearing black.

Chris: And that's exactly what I mean.

Prezzer: It's realistic though. Bad guys don't generally phone the police up first to check what they'll be wearing.

Mark: There are two ways to get around that, though. One is the friendly fire option, the other is to always choose one skin per team.

Prezzer: Yeah, when you're checking to see who's on what team when you join, you could do with seeing what skin they're wearing so you can coordinate. Dahling. Thing is, it's only Chris that seems to have a problem with

that. And Martin. I don't have any trouble with it.

Martin: The reason I like it is the exhilaration factor. Like in *Jailbreak*, knowing that if you get shot a couple of times it's all over makes it much more exciting. And consequently makes you much more jumpy when you see someone. So it leads to errors.

Prezzer: It continues the classic *Half-Life* tradition of tension and atmosphere.

Dave: The best part though is the fact it has the ultimate consequence – dying. When you die after 30 seconds or so it's a real bitch. You sit there swearing at the screen because you can't believe that fucker has killed you.

Mark: Knowing you can die also makes it so much more satisfying when you kill someone else though. Because you just know they're on the other end effing and blinding.

Prezzer: Especially when it's Dan Emery.

Everyone: (*General agreement*)

Mark: Buying weapons at the start works a lot better than choosing a class, and the fact that you can drop your weapon and pick up someone else's.

Dave: The main reason I reckon it's so brilliant, the reason it pisses on every other game from a great height...

Mark: Is because you're good?

Dave: No, it's because rather than picking a particular class at the beginning and having certain abilities like in *TFC*, here you polarise into your natural class anyway. If you've got really fast

reflexes, you can buy a sub-machine gun and go around corners knowing you'll be able to get your shots off before the next person. If you haven't got such good reflexes you can buy a sniper rifle and sit there picking people off...

Prezzer: I don't understand what Chris was saying earlier about it not being a real team game. It is, it's one of the best team games out there. There are so many strategies going on.

Chris: If you go into free-look mode and follow some people about I'd always be seeing people just standing about doing nothing or not bothering to follow their team-mates.

Dave: Well they're shit players then, aren't they?

Prezzer: I can see how it would probably work better tactically over a LAN than the Internet, where you can shout orders to people right there. Over the Net it does become a little harder to tell people what to do since no one really utilises the radio commands properly. Except the truly dedicated clans.

Mark: We just use them for comedy value!

Chris: I just don't think it's as much of a team game as something like *TFC*. You have to have a strategy to win in *TFC*, you don't really need one here...

Dave: (*Incredulous*) Of course you need a strategy!

Chris: When have we ever made plans and formed strategies in all the time I've played this game? It doesn't happen.

Prezzer: Once you've played a map about three or four times you quickly learn the best ways to go and the best tactics to use. So does everyone else on your team, so there's usually a general understanding.

Mark: So do your opponents most of the time, which leads to dozens of stand-offs throughout.

Prezzer: They are brilliant stand-offs though. The best Mexican stand-offs in the business.

Martin: There are a few good sniping points on most maps as well. Places that you can head straight for and keep covered. Of course, there are usually two or three different entry points on each map so you never quite know which way they'll be coming from. You'll think you're safe and then someone will sneak up a ladder behind you and take you out.

Dave: There are moments of sheer panic in the game. Like when you've been in a fight and you back off and realise you've only got about five per cent health left and the bad guys will be coming after you any second, you just fucking run.

Prezzer: What about the money thing? I'm not sure whether it's a good thing or not. If you lose three or four games on the trot you suddenly become really limited in what you can buy.

Dave: Don't lose three or four games on the trot then.

Richie: It does balance things out a little though. If you're losing three or four games in a row, you will start getting some extra cash

"The best part is the ultimate in-game consequence – dying. When you die after 30 seconds it's a real bitch"

DAVE ON COUNTER-STRIKE



Dave: We do! All the time!

Chris: No we don't.

Mark: That's only because most of the CS players in our building are all in different rooms and we're just unwinding after a hard day's work. We're not taking it seriously then. It you had been there when we played Clan UK, then you'd have been hearing strategies and plans being made. **Dave:** Besides most of the maps only lend themselves to two or three strategies at most. It's only when you're unfamiliar with them that you spend time wandering around by yourself.

to help you out a little. The best thing about *Counter-Strike* though is that if any of these mods were on the shop shelves for about 30 quid, you'd go 'naah'. But *Counter-Strike* is different.

Dave: I'd buy it, definitely.

Prezzer: You're a games journalist, you don't buy things.

Dave: Yeah, but I'd buy this. I'd buy six copies.

Mark: I'd buy seven.

Dave: So far, it's the best game I've played. Ever.

All: Ever?

Dave: Ever.

Chris: That's a ridiculous comment.

COUNTER-STRIKE

Perhaps the most addictive multiplayer game since the original *Quake*. Two teams, terrorists and counter-terrorists, battle it out to the death in a real-world scenarios. Hostage rescue, bomb planting and the like, combined with the legendary *Half-Life* tension. We strongly advise you play it. Now. Go on.

DEVELOPER	The Counter-Strike Team
GAME	Half-Life
WEBSITE	http://www.counter-strike.net/
PRICE	Free download

AND THE WINNER IS...

Something of a one-horse race really. Not to say the others are particularly bad though

There was hardly any doubt as to the winner of this Supertest. With most of the team visibly twitching every time anyone mentioned the name *Counter-Strike*, plus the fact that it gets played constantly in the office, plus the fact that it has become the most played online action game ever (with more players than *Quake III*, *Unreal Tournament* and *Team Fortress Classic* combined), meant that the *Half-Life* terrorist mod wins hands down. "They've got everything right," says Dave. "The balance, the realism, the atmosphere, the tension. it's all there."

Chris was the lone voice of dissent, however, favouring *Jailbreak*. "It's more of an exciting leap forward for the *Quake* series than *Quake III* was from *Quake II*," he boasts, lamenting the fact that more people won't play it with him in the office.

Team Fortress still has enough of a pull to offer some variety to *Half-Life* players, but as Mark points out, "The classes can be a bit restricting for players used to the freedom of *Counter-Strike*." *Action Half-Life*, meanwhile, can be fun, providing you're not after anything too serious.

OVERALL WINNER



The perils of flying economy.

TOMORROW'S PEOPLE

We gaze into the crystal ball and tell you about future mods

It's hard to keep a constant track of what's just around the mods corner, as the frequency with which new projects are announced then abruptly cancelled is pretty high. Which is understandable considering that most mod programmers are constantly having to juggle the design work with real-life commitments such as school, work and girlfriends (OK, maybe two out of three).

Among the more interesting projects being worked on are *Navy SEALs* and *Urban Terror*, two *Counter-Strike* alikes for *Quake III*, although they'll have a tough time winning fans away from *CS* itself. Meanwhile, the *Half-Life* engine is throwing up more diverse projects by the day. At the time of writing there were at least two American Civil War-

era mods in development (*Carbine* being perhaps the better of the two), as well as a conversion of the N64 hit *GoldenEye*. Most intriguing of all though is the *Half-Life Resident Evil TC*, which should give zombie fans everywhere a new lease on (un)life.

The big name on the horizon though is Valve's own *Team Fortress 2*. Supposedly set to redefine the online gaming world, it has been hinted to be 'close to beta' for the better part of two years. Still using the *Half-Life* engine, *TF2* should strengthen the team-based gameplay with a bigger role for specialist units, and a commander player who oversees the battlefield. Whether they follow them of course is another matter entirely.



A man in a box, in *Urban Terror*, yesterday.

WHITHER UNREAL?

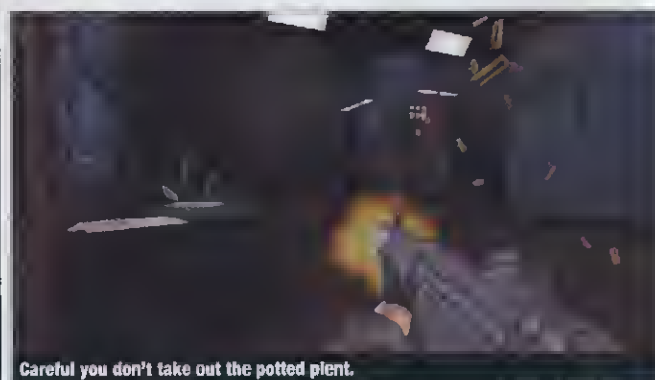
Hang on, there's someone missing...

Before you start firing off letters of complaint by the sackload, we should explain why we didn't include any *Unreal Tournament* mods in this round-up. Well, the mod community is so packed with files that it was hard enough narrowing it down to the five we did. The panel felt that presently, with the exception of one or two notable efforts, the *UT* scene doesn't really contain anything that has a major

impact on the initial game. Those that are different – *Tactical Ops*, *Infiltration*, *Strike Force* and *Blitzkrieg: 1941* for instance – are still at too early a stage to be judged fairly. Others, such as the various American Civil War mods and *The Russian Front* have barely left the planning stage. What we've seen does show promise though, so be sure to check our Online section each month for more news.



UT mods are still at a crossroads in development.



Careful you don't take out the potted plant.

BUDGET ZONE

The budget shelf usually resembles a scene from *Return Of The Living Dead*, but if you look hard enough you can occasionally find a live one

★ NECROPHILE Mark Hill

MONACO GRAND PRIX

★ £4.99 • Focus Essential • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO** REQUIRES A 3D card **WE SAY** More RAM helps to smooth things out

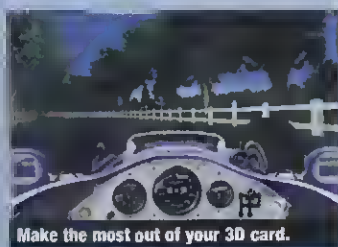
This sequel to *F1 Racing Simulation* certainly stands true to the simulation part of its title. Novices who are used to arcade racing games will soon find themselves spinning into a wall of tyres and watching helplessly as the excellently programmed drivers whizz past. But even if you're not one of the hardcore drivers who complains when a tiny detail doesn't reach a perfect standard of realism, the game looks so good and plays so superbly that it's worth persevering until you're competing with the best. There's also a 'classic' racing mode, with '30s models and autumn leave-coloured screens to keep you interested. *Monaco Grand Prix* requires a pretty hefty machine to look its best, which means you can get the most out of your PIII for a fiver. A budget must-have if you own a feedback steering wheel.

PC VERDICT

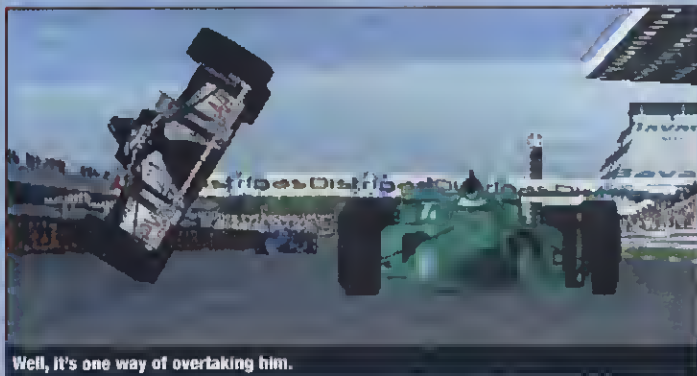
74%



Cars. Speed. Tracks. Good.



Make the most out of your 3D card.



Well, it's one way of overtaking him.

BEST BUY



Realistic looks? Not here, mate.



Managing your invoices is more fun.

FOOTBALL WORLD MANAGER

★ £4.99 • Focus Essential • Out now

TECH SPECS

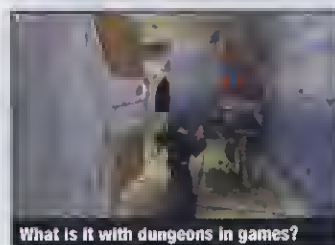
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** That'll do

Football World Manager failed to set the world alight the first time round, and it doesn't manage now. A quick look through the player stats and you'll easily spot that it falls flat on its face just like every other managing game apart from *Championship Manager*. Players are out of position, their ratings are completely at odds with reality and their portraits bear no resemblance to the real thing whatsoever. But apart from this, the

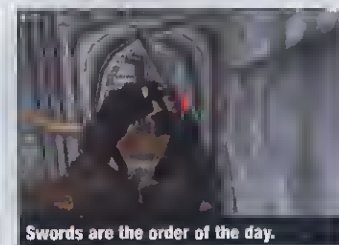
gameplay just about reaches acceptable standards. There's as much emphasis on messing about with kits and stadiums as there is with tactics and you're provided with a wealth of options, but they're never easy to access. If you want a budget buy, get one of the older *Champ Managers*. You know it makes sense.

PC VERDICT

52%



What is it with dungeons in games?



Swords are the order of the day.

DEATHTRAP DUNGEON

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

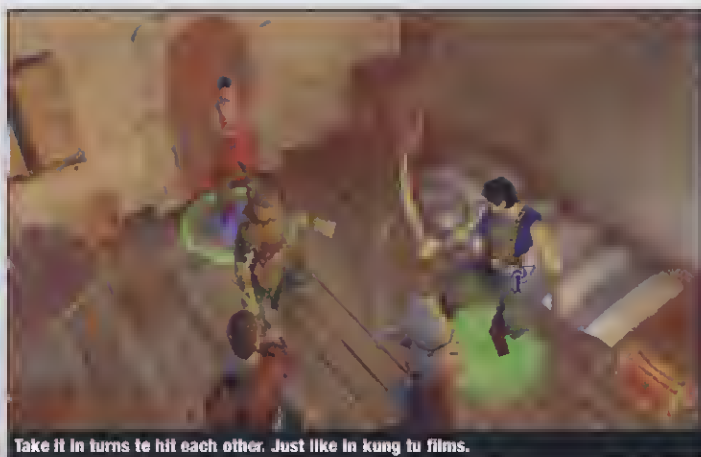
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P120 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Get a 3D card in there

Hack. Slash. Two words that go together quite nicely, don't you think? The problem begins when you have little to add to them. Both *Diablo* and *Vampire* have been rightly accused of this, but the fact remains that they are far more than that: they both have character stats, spells and a story. When *Deathtrap Dungeon* came out a couple of years ago, we were all

disappointed that Iain Livingstone (who co-wrote many of the fondly remembered *Fighting Fantasy* books with Steve Jackson) had come up with something so action-based and so lacking in depth. Dungeons and swords is about as much as you're likely to find here, together with some dodgy camera work. But if that's all you want, you could do a whole lot worse for a fiver.

PC VERDICT

65%



Take it in turns to hit each other. Just like in kung fu films.

RETURN TO KRONDOR

★ £9.99 • Sierra Originals • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 24Mb RAM **WE SAY** More memory and a 3D card help to smooth out things

Deep down in the recycling bin of role-playing games there's a copy of *Return To Krondor*, Sierra's follow-up to *Betrayal Of Krondor*, based on the books by fantasy writer Raymond E. Feist. It's easy to see how it would end up there, offering as it does some very bog-standard graphics (even for a two-year-old game), a terrible interface and some seriously unpleasant voice-acting. Its one redeeming feature,

for those of us into that sort of thing, is the turn-based combat, although even that falls short of the *Final Fantasy* battles we've grown used to. All things considered then, it might be best to leave it rotting at the bottom of that bin, and hope the box gets re-used to package something better.

PCZVERDICT 58%

DARKSTONE

★ £9.99 • EA Classics • Out now

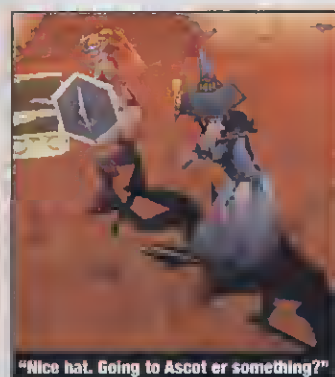
TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** A 3D card **WE SAY** 64Mb RAM to avoid chugging

Going down the same route as *Diablo II* but with a fully rotateable and zoomable 3D camera, *Darkstone* is an extremely simple proposition. Far from the lush gorgeousness of *Vampire*, this French-developed affair has little in the way of plot, script or acting talent, but still manages to entertain through the classic

Ingredients of levelling-up, spell-casting and dungeon exploration. The graphics are pretty poor and the animation is even worse, while the whole game's aesthetic seems to be caught between the colour overload of a Japanese console RPG and the polygonal conventions of Western character design. However, give it time and it will grow on you, but only if you can't afford *Vampire*.

PCZVERDICT 67%



"Nice hat. Going to Ascot or something?"



"I told you you'd see stars."

RAYMAN GOLD

★ £4.99 • Focus Essential • Out now

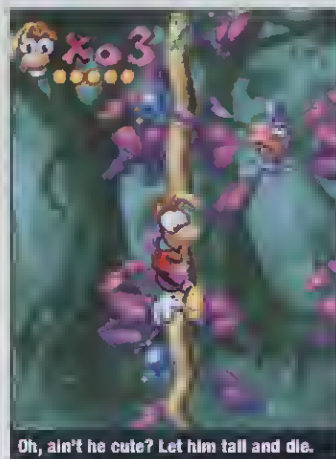
TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** You may have trouble getting your sound card to work. This is DOS after all

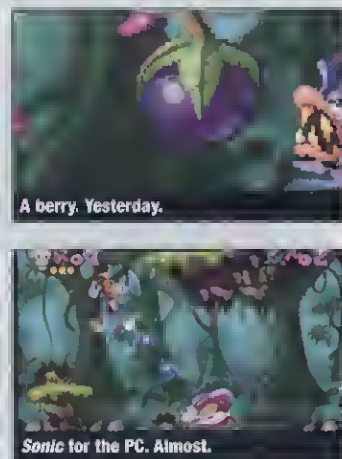
The legless and armless *Rayman* is, together with old *Abe*, one of the few platform crusaders on the PC. And while never reaching the heights of the console paladins *Mario* and *Sonic*, this is a generally pleasing foray into the world of wildly coloured 2D worlds and frenetic jumping. Shamelessly aimed at kiddies, *Rayman Gold* has silly faces, fluffy clouds

and cute characters projectile-vomited onto every level. Extremely simple, with graphics that often seem too big to show you enough of the level on-screen at any time, this Gold edition has a world-building tool that you will never, ever use.

PCZVERDICT 62%



Oh, ain't he cute? Let him fall and die.



A berry. Yesterday.

Sonic for the PC. Almost.



Bridge battles are always important.

MYTH

★ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** More RAM and a 3D card

One of the first real-time strategy games with a fully rotateable and zoomable 3D engine, *Myth* certainly broke new ground in the genre, setting the scene for this year's masterpiece *Shogun: Total War*. The units are made up of human templars and medieval warriors on one side and a range of stupid fantasy monsters such as

Myrmidons and Ghouls on the other — and the battles are gloriously gory. Unfortunately, it's bloody hard to get to grips with and suffers from one or two gameplay hitches. The sequel was much better, but if you want the ultimate in gigantic 3D RTS war go for *Shogun*, this is strictly for the budget enthusiast.

PCZVERDICT 70%

FEEDBACK

The usual collection of pats on the back and bitching makes its way onto this month's pages. **Mark Hill** shows off his cutting and pasting skills



IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in **PC ZONE** over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, **PC ZONE**, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

E-MAIL Alternatively, e-mail them to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

WE WANT YOUR REVIEWS WIN A SUPER SCOOTER!



That's right. We have five trendy new scooters to give away (each worth £1,500), and we're giving you the chance to get a review published in **PC ZONE**.

Just send your usual Feedback comments, along with a 300 word review of the game you're commenting on (clearly marked 'review'), to the following email address: editor@pczone.co.uk. We'll pick the best review, publish it and send a scooter to the winner. All the usual competition rules apply, and you must be over 18 to qualify for entry. Any winning review must be of sufficient quality to be printed and the prize carries over to the next month if there is no winner.

VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE - REDEMPTION

REVIEWED #92, August
SCORE 90%

What we thought

Z PCZONE CLASSIC "As long as you don't come to *Vampire* with the wrong expectations, you are unlikely to find a more challenging, rewarding or gorgeous RPG."

What you said

★ "I bought *Vampire* after reading your glowing review of it and I can't believe you gave it 90 per cent. It's terrible. Sure, it has nice graphics, but the control system is dire and the combat is absolutely pathetic. There are too many characters attacking at once making it difficult to see what's going on, it's unexciting and it ends up being so frustrating it makes the game not worth playing."

Eddie Amphlett

★ "*Vampire* is an absolute masterpiece. I haven't played a game with so much atmosphere

and class since *System Shock 2*. Although linear at times, the original and involving storyline makes up for it by a long way. Hats off to the Nihilistic crew."

Chris Ainer

★ "Your review was good apart from one major thing. I've had the game for a couple of weeks now, and finished it once. I'll play it again though and it does capture a lot of the *V:TM* atmosphere. However, in your review you criticised the London and New York sections. Although I admit they do feel slightly lacking, it is unfair to say that the developers have simply taken a clichéd look at London. Please remember that this is a game based on White Wolf's RPG and novels, and that this is the type of Modern Day World that exists in the source material. To have changed that

would, I feel, have been worse because it would be altering an established theme. Remember, lots of players of the RPG will play this and expect it to be as close to the source as possible. Otherwise your review was spot on."

Lee Rossington



Opinion is still divided on *Vampire: The Masquerade*.

★ "From the start of playing, all the way to the very end, I felt I was playing *Diablo* in 3D. Not that this is a bad thing, however. Once you've got the hang of the controls, the game is a straightforward hack 'n' slasher. Unfortunately, modern day weaponry just doesn't seem as effective (or fun) as the swords and axes. The loading times are exceptional, considering the amount of data that must be involved. The music is good, the sound effects are good, the speech is good and the graphics are excellent."

Nathan Budd

COMMENT
Lee makes a very good point about why the London and New York levels look so

poor. Nihilistic was just trying to be true to the original game. They could still have been better though.

DEUS EX

REVIEWED #93, September
SCORE 94%

What we thought

Z PCZONE CLASSIC "It is a giant of a game and another step forward for the role-playing genre."

★ "I had high hopes that *Deus Ex* would be a brilliant game. As soon as your mag came through my door, I read the review, and slapped the demo on my brand spanking new PC. Me and my mates think it's even better than *Half-Life*. Considering I'm new to the RPG genre, I thought it rocked bells and was more satisfying than *GoldenEye*. If developers continue making games like this, a social life is not worth living."

Russell Pentecost

★ "I am a casual player of casual games and have recently enjoyed the fantastic *System Shock 2*. I



Deus Ex: appalling graphics?



Ground Control: "a superb game" says John Hill.

opened my *PC ZONE* today to find a RPG game reviewed called *Dues Ex* (sic). Now saying a game is better than *System Shock 2* isn't something to say lightly, so I thought this new game must be something special. I went on the training mission first to see that I couldn't read the small text such as datapads and speech script. When I got round to playing the game I found the graphics appalling and my bro helper a little hostile. When I tried to shoot him in the back for taking up so much of my time he shot me!!!! True it may be just self defence, and true maybe I'm total crap at playing it, but I can dig *System Shock 2*. What was Paul Mallinson thinking when he gave *Deus Ex* 94 per cent, I'd have given it 52 per cent for effort. I uninstalled it directly after playing it and I don't have a German PC so don't pull that one on me. I'd like to know, are there any sane people who don't like this game out there?"

A Complaint

COMMENT

This is surely one of the greatest titles of all time and it will be interesting to see how it fares in our next Superfest against *System Shock 2*, *Vampire* and *Planescape: Torment*. Oh, and A Complaint, it's funny you should mention sanity in your letter...

ICEWIND DALE

REVIEWED #93, September
SCORE 75%

What we thought

"A disappointment, but I'm sure *Baldur's Gate* fans will take it to their hearts nonetheless."

What you said

"IWD was never touted as 'the next step beyond *Baldur's Gate*... in the run up to its release'. From the outset the developers said that it's a dungeon crawl utilising the Infinity Engine. Even the ads state

'A *Baldur's Gate* Engine Adventure', as you yourself noticed. It's offered as a hack 'n' slash alternative before *BG2* arrives; nothing more, nothing less. What exactly are you trying to say with the sidebar entitled: 'Spellbound?' If you wanted to sound like an RPG pleb, mission accomplished. 'A mana system would be much better... Black Isle: try harder.' It's got nothing to do with Black Isle; it is creating officially licensed AD&D products. Spell memorisation is a key component of the AD&D magic system, they couldn't change it if they wanted to (nor should they). Anyway, it's not about 'forgetting' the spells, it's about magic users recuperating and getting their minds together so that they can cast them again. Why is that 'crap'? You enjoyed *Planescape* and that utilised the exact same structure, did it detract from that? I don't think so."

Ian Wilson

COMMENT

The point of the review was the AD&D style spell system is no longer acceptable to mainstream gamers who are used to more user-friendly RPGs. That's why we recommended *Icewind Dale*

Not everyone was disappointed with *Icewind Dale*.

only to *Baldur's Gate* fans.

Planescape uses the same poncy spell system but is otherwise superior in every way, so we can live with it.

GROUND CONTROL

REVIEWED #92, August
SCORE 87%

What we thought

"*Ground Control* is a major leap towards ensuring that playing RTS games is as easy as scoring in a brothel."

What you said

"I was caught between buying *Ground Control* and *Dogs Of War*, so I'm glad I read the reviews first. *Ground Control* is superb. Its fluid control system, polished graphics and excellent gameplay show *Force Commander* up for the uncontrollable, tank rushing, waste of hard drive space it really is. If it wasn't for the murderous air attacks I reckon it would be worth another couple of per cent. But as it is I'd say you got it just about right."

John Hill

"I always was a fan of the mad base-building, but have found that if you build your base quick enough you can hold out any enemy forces, whatever the game is and then the longevity goes out of the window. The game engine is totally brilliant and wipes the floor with *Earth 2150* and *Dark Reign 2*. It's also very realistic - it uses people and proper units not the stupid mutants that you get in *Command & Conquer* and *Dark Reign 2*. It's all about strategy and

console (specifically the PlayStation), you give it a bad mark. I quote past examples such as *Final Fantasy VIII*, *Driver*, *Soul Reaver* and many others. You say that the dinosaurs do not attack you from inches away when you are looking at something. Excuse me, but I believe this to be the same for the classic *Resident Evil* series. Did you mention the fact that the dinosaurs can pursue the player through doors? No? Funny that.

"Every time a game comes out that was originally for a console (specifically the PlayStation), you give it a bad mark"

DUNCAN MACGREGOR ON *DINO CRISIS*

has absolutely stunning graphics. What more could you want?"

Mathew Roberts

DINO CRISIS

REVIEWED #93, August
SCORE 56%

What we thought

"*Dino Crisis* loses the tension that *RE2* had in spades."

What you said

"You've done it again. Every time a game comes out that was originally for a

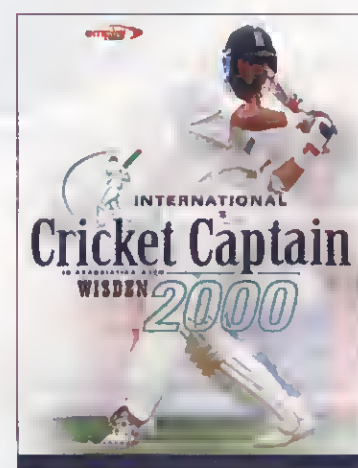
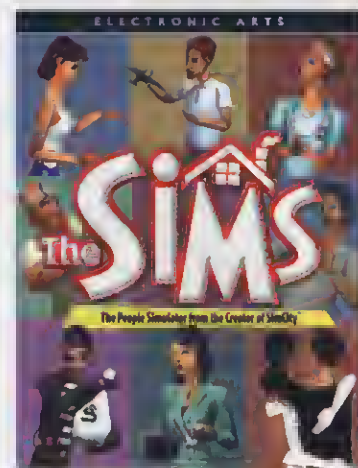
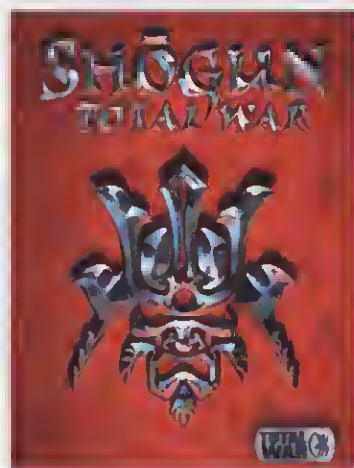
No tension in the game? Don't talk rubbish! Let's stop downgrading games just out of jealousy because PlayStation gamers got it first."

Duncan MacGregor

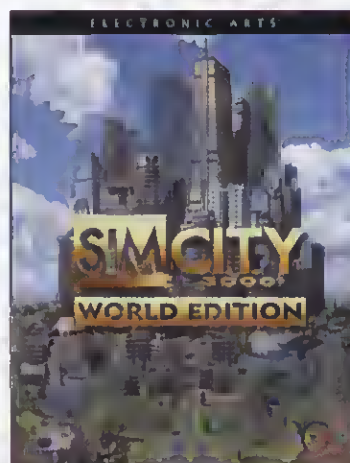
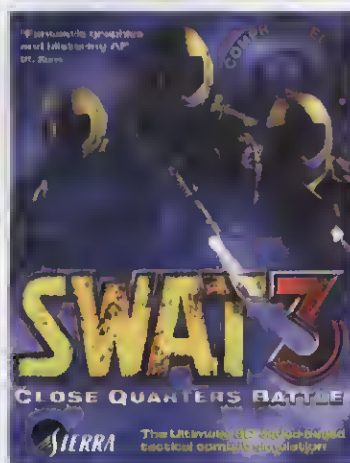
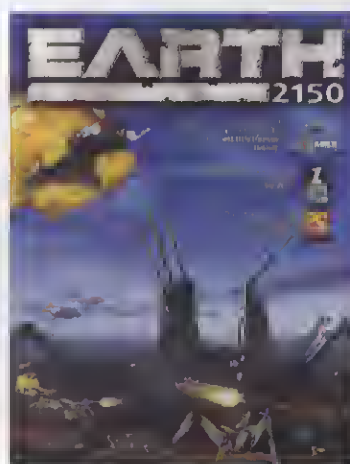
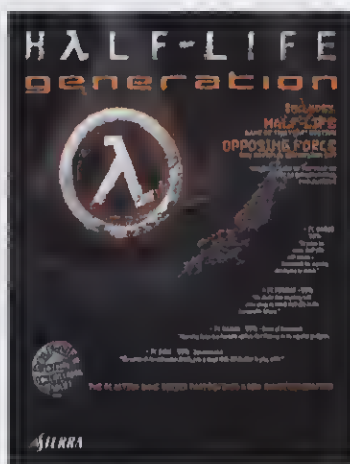
COMMENT

Why should we play games that are completely out of date in the PC market? If we wanted to play *Dino Crisis* we'd do it on a PlayStation (yes, we do play them), but on this occasion we don't want to because it's completely mediocre. [X]

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NEW FACES

★ YOUR HOST Richie Shoemaker



There has been a terrific response from *PC ZONE* readers towards our Online section, so much so that many of you are keen for it to increase in size. It's taken a while for online gaming to take off in the UK, but I'm sure you'll agree the wait has been worthwhile.

Like in the rest of the magazine we have a dedicated online gaming team. One of the founding members of Clan UK, Jed Norton, who has been writing for us for a couple of months, is a seasoned online role-player, with friends in high places. Having spent years of his time playing every role-playing game imaginable, it's amazing he finds the time to play his other favourite genre – space-combat sims.

On the other side of the gaming spectrum is Phil Wand, who of course has been with us for a couple of years. His expertise is universal, but when it comes to first-person shooters, mods and the Internet in general, it is him we turn to.

The newest face on the team is Tony Lamb, a face so new in fact that we've yet had the opportunity to gaze upon it. Tony, like myself, is a jack-of-all-trades. With so many fingers in every conceivable gaming pie, the thought did cross our minds that he might not be human at all – maybe an octopus.

So, it looks as if we've got all our bases covered and in time I'm sure more multiplayer coverage will creep into the mag. But don't worry about the single-player stuff disappearing just yet; we've got a few years left in that area. And if you have any comments, please email me at my new address richie@pczoneline.com

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ONLINE REVIEWS POLICY

When it comes to mods and total conversions (TCs) for games such as *Half-Life*, they are often released in beta form (ie unfinished) and are generally being updated constantly. When we review them we will always try to take into consideration that they are often worked on by teams working just for the love of it and released free for our enjoyment. Even so, there is a lot of pap out there and downloading such things can often be a waste of good surfing time.

Similarly with retail online games such as *EverQuest*, code is always being updated and although we can't provide regular updates we will try to review major ones as and when they occur.

NEWS



With no screenshots available, we'll use any excuse to get a *Star Wars* photo in the mag.

STAR WARS ONLINE

LucasArts take Han Solo and co into cyberspace

We've finally been getting some solid details on the first *Star Wars Online* game, in development from LucasArts and Verant – the creators of *EverQuest*. A tentative release for the 3D-accelerated RPG is now scheduled for the end of next year.

Bypassing the first three episodes, players of *Star Wars Online* will be able to start on two planets – each split into 50 'zones' – set at the time of the Empire's purge on the Rebel Alliance and the capture of Princess Leia at the beginning of *Episode IV: A New Hope*. It is hoped that as time goes on, story elements from the films will permeate the game, maybe in the form of galaxy-wide news reports.

Although players won't be able to control the main characters from the *Star Wars* films, we are told that there will be a chance to meet them in the game.

The number of player classes, races and skills have still to be determined, but we can expect to choose from a wide variety of roles from spies, bounty hunters and traders. Hopefully, players may even be able to join the Rebel Alliance or the Empire's legion of Stormtroopers.

We are hoping to see the same level of graphical detail seen in *EverQuest*, although no screenshots have yet been released. If it's as good-looking as *EverQuest*, we'll be happy.



Expect the larger ships to come with a fighter escort.

BATTLE ISLE: DARKSPACE

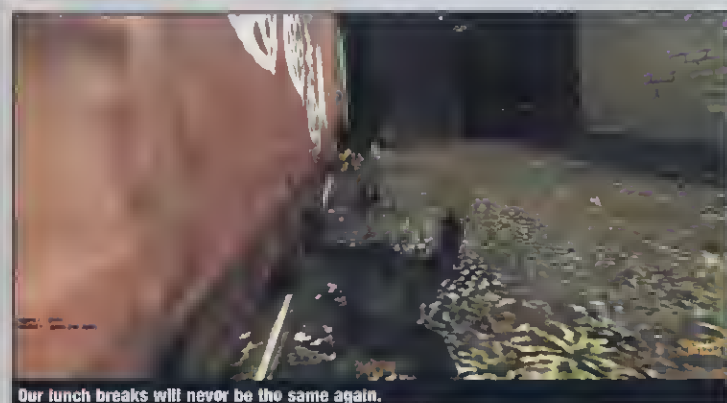
Blue Byte's online debut revealed

With *Battle Isle IV* waiting in the wings, Blue Byte seems keen to expand the land-based strategy series by taking it to the stars with *Battle Isle: DarkSpace*, an online real-time strategy game where ship captains fight for control of planetary systems.

Due to be released early next year via www.bluebyte.com, *DarkSpace* will feature 18 ship classes for players to command, from small gunships to gigantic capital-class battleships. Players can take part in single missions as well as campaign games, with new technology, ships and missions being added soon after the game is released. No pricing structure has yet been decided, although there will be a free trial period for new users.



WWW.ZONEGAMES.CO.UK



Ten new PC ZONE online games servers on the way

Forget the summer. The weather's been a damp squib, and we've just scored ten multiplayer games servers courtesy of games ISP Games-World.net (GWN), meaning you'll be indoors hunched over your keyboard anyway. Yes folks, forget those hot August dog days sat under a tree in your garden reading a copy of *PC ZONE*, because Christmas has come early this year. Pay a visit to www.zonegames.co.uk where you'll get detailed information on all your new toys, where to find them, and how to get yourself hooked up with a free, super-fast GWN Internet dial-up.

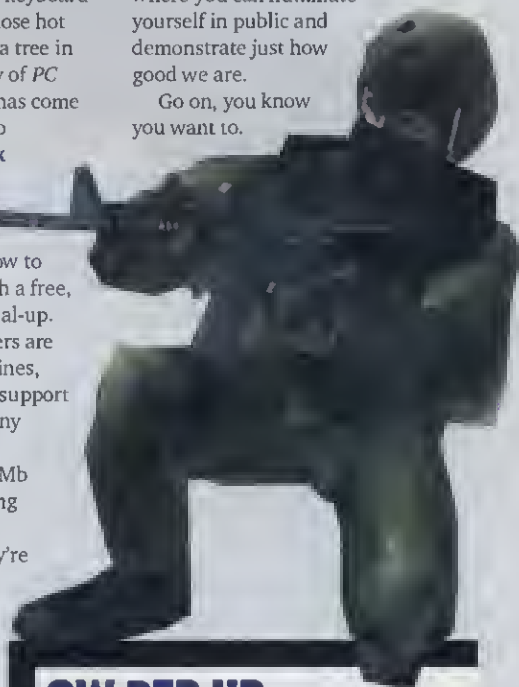
The new *PC ZONE* servers are top-banana Pentium machines, which together are able to support more than 120 players at any given moment, hosted on Games-World.net's fat 100Mb connection. We'll be keeping them constantly checked and updated to ensure they're running smoothly, and that they all have the latest maps, patches and software updates. In short, you won't want to go anywhere else for your fix.

The gaming menu currently includes a bacchanalian feast of *Quake III Arena*, *Quake III Fortress*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Counter-Strike* and *Team Fortress Classic*. Once a month we'll be dedicating another machine to the very latest titles and mods, allowing you to sample what we believe will be the future classics. We'll also run a special competition server for those first-person hotshots who wish to prove their worth in an online Fraglympics.

As an incentive, the *PC ZONE* team will use

them regularly throughout the day (not yet, but soon), and the www.zonegames.co.uk homepage will highlight where you can find them and kill them. We'll also organise special matches where you can humiliate yourself in public and demonstrate just how good we are.

Go on, you know you want to.



GW PEP UP

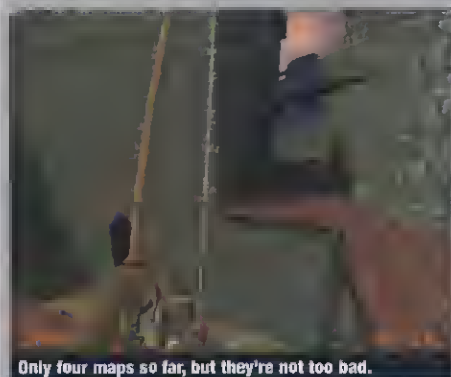
With the new *PC ZONE* servers hosted on the Games-World network, you'll get more bytes down your pipe if you get yourself a Games-World dial-up.

Renowned throughout the UK online gaming community for their speed, GWN dial-ups won't cost you a penny – all you need to do is cough up for local call charges on their 0845 number. And remember, you don't have to touch your existing dial-up settings. mail.games-world.net/signup



THE MOD SQUAD

PIRATES, VIKINGS & KNIGHTS FOR HALF-LIFE



Only four maps so far, but they're not too bad.

Just released in beta form, *Pirates, Vikings & Knights* is one of the more original mods out for the ever-popular *Half-Life*. You choose one of the three sides, each with varying skills, looks and abilities. We spoke with Matt Bishop, one of the trio responsible, and asked why *Pirates, Vikings & Knights* may be worth downloading?

PCZ FPS mods featuring hand-to-hand combat have been, er... hit and miss affairs. Why will yours work and why did you choose these character types?

MB They just seemed like a cool set of teams that had all sorts of different weapons that would be really fun to use, and we were getting a little sick of all the other same types of mods out there. Ideas grew, we got feedback from other guys in the dorm, and *PVK* developed. We thought it would be neat to focus on the close combat part of the game since no one had really done that, and the reason I think it works is because of the satisfaction you get when you splat somebody up against the wall up close and personal.

PCZ What's so special about your mod, compared to others such as *Counter-Strike* and *CTF*?

MB Our mod is rather original, I think. We've got things that no other mod has, and even some stuff that no mod has ever attempted before. Our weapons work differently than everyone else's, with realistic delays, and require some actual skill to use, just like they would in real life. If you're wielding a two-handed sword, you don't just wait for someone to cross your line of sight and click, you need to plan your attacks better to the individual hit level. Also, there are other mods working in some of the same time periods ours focuses on, but ours is out now, at least in a beta. The game is open to many different scenarios too, so I feel it will have a great replay value. Obviously, it's hard to compare to *CS* and *CTF* and *TFC* and so on, but I think our mod has lots to offer that others don't.

PCZ How does the class system work? What classes will there be?

MB All the teams will have classes that, for now, just have different weapons and speeds. So far, there are three classes for each team, and we're hoping they'll be balanced. The pirates have a skirmish pirate, sniper pirate and a pirate captain. Vikings will have spear vikings, axe vikings and hammer vikings. The knights have a man-at-arms, bowman and a heavy knight. For now, *PVK* will just be *PVK*, but there is a possibility of adding other teams in the future.

Beta v0.6 of *Pirates, Vikings & Knights* is out now. See www.planethalflife.com/pvk for more info.

CONFIRMED KILL

Graphically lovely team-based flight simulator gets ready for take-off

Following on from *Air Warrior*, *WarBirds* and *Aces High*, *Confirmed Kill* is the latest online WWII flight sim, this time with the backing of big boy publisher Eidos.

Confirmed Kill has had a chequered history that stretches back over six years, to a time when Eidos were known as Domark and flight sims were as popular as first-person games are today. An early beta version of *Confirmed Kill* was actually released last year, then it simply disappeared. However, developer Imagination Unlimited is back on the case and although Eidos won't be releasing the game, they remain

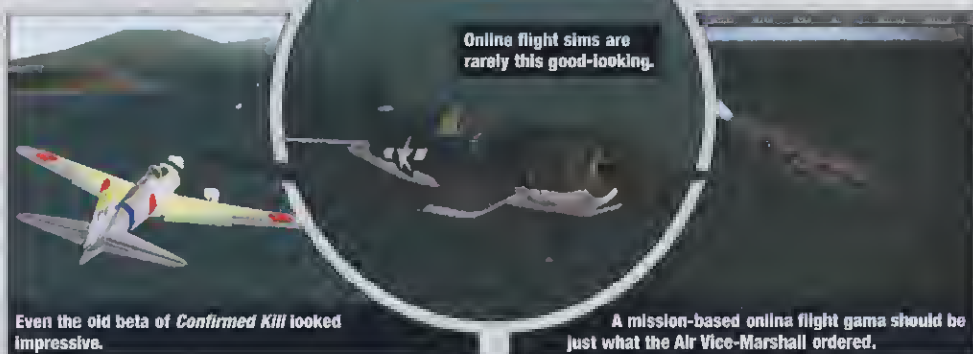
committed to its success. A new playable beta will be available in a couple of months and, when finished, the game will be available from the developer's website with a monthly fee for regular flyers.

Unlike other online flight games, *Confirmed Kill* will offer much more than a set of deathmatch and team 'arenas'. Obviously influenced by the success of *Counter-Strike*, the small team of six are planning to include clear objective-based missions. At the

Battle Of Midway for example, American planes are tasked with sinking the Japanese fleet while the Japanese must defend their carriers.

Features worth getting excited about include top-notch graphics (the previous beta was considered far in advance graphically of any other online sim), realistic physics and damage modeling, 3D virtual cockpits and even original effects, which include seeing your cockpit engulfed in flames.

No release date is yet known but you can sign up for the next beta test stage by emailing the guys at www.iu.com.



Even the old beta of *Confirmed Kill* looked impressive.

Online flight sims are rarely this good-looking.

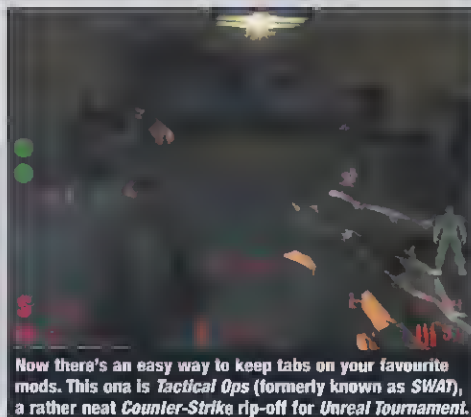
A mission-based online flight game should be just what the Air Vice-Marshal ordered.



There will be ground targets aplenty.

KEEPING UP WITH MODS

Worried that you're getting left behind in the mod world? Worry no more



Now there's an easy way to keep tabs on your favourite mods. This one is *Tactical Ops* (formerly known as *SWAT*), a rather neat *Counter-Strike* rip-off for *Unreal Tournament*.

Ever heard of a mod browser? No neither had we until we stumbled upon *Going Up*, a nifty piece of software that catalogues all the Websites of mods released for *Half-Life*, *Quake III Arena* and *Unreal Tournament*, telling you when each is updated so you can go to the relevant Website and download them with a minimum of fuss. The plan is to add compatibility with games such as *Soldier Of Fortune* as soon as mods are released for it. *Going Up*, which also includes an offline database of previews and reviews, as well as links to other gaming-based websites, can be downloaded (2.2Mb) from www.gameralley.com/goingup/. Other mod browsers in development include *MOOScape* and *The Swapper*, both of which can be investigated by visiting ztp://modscape.telefragged.com/ and <http://ssl.telefragged.com/ts.shtml> respectively.



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It there's an election, the candidates may want to kiss your babies.



The Mayor who decides where each city's residential zones are located.

STARPEACE

The online sci-fi city simulator

Pitched as a 'real-time economic strategy game', *Starpeace* can be likened to a persistent online version of *SimCity*, only set in the future at a time when Earth is facing overpopulation and environmental tragedy – not too far in the future though, the year 2030 to be exact.

With a cool \$100 million burning a hole in your pocket, you play a VIP on an Earth colony. Initially you begin by choosing a city from which to start up your business, depending on the political and social climate within. Each city is governed by other players, elected either by the non-player population or other business leaders. Whether you stick to one business, keeping it small but profitable, or go 'global' and diversify is up to you. You can even go into politics as a sideline or full-on, or simply

just spend your time talking to others. City leaders can designate residential, commercial and industrial sectors, set taxes and fines, all of which each business must adhere to or face the consequences. City mayors can rise to the position of government minister, even the President of an entire planet.

Transport and communication will play an important role in the game, with roads and railways linking suburbs, city centres and distant settlements. More than 300 facilities will be available to build with more than 600 technologies to research, and new ones being added on a regular basis. If successful, the game will eventually develop to incorporate war-like strategies and we are also promised 3D graphics and first-person action.

If you want to know more, you'll find the developer's Website at www.starpeace.net. Beta testing is currently underway and release is set for November through Monte Cristo Multimedia.

THE SHERMAN PROJECT



We can expect a much more tactical game of cat-and-mouse than even the mighty *Counter-Strike* provides.

Ultra-realistic *Half-Life* mod ahoy

With some mods you can tell straight away what game they are for, but on first seeing screenshots for *The Sherman Project* we were convinced it was a whole new game. It isn't of course: *The Sherman Project* is the latest in a long line of realistic mods in the *Counter-Strike* mould, again for everyone's favourite first-person shooter *Half-Life*.

What's different, apart from the gorgeous graphics, is that *The Sherman Project* aims to be even more realistic, taking as its inspiration *Rainbow Six* and *Rogue Spear*. Unfortunately very little is known about the mod – the developers are keeping very quiet – but we can expect a version to be released soon, with weapons ranging from M16s and MAC11s to pistols and shotguns. There will even be training missions, set amongst prefabricated houses and firing ranges. Keep an eye on <http://www.planethalflife.com/sherman> for updates.

SHORTS

HIGHLANDER ONLINE



French developer Kalisto has scooped the exclusive rights to create games based on the TV and film series of *Highlander*. *Highlander Online* will be the first title released, allowing thousands of players to fight their way through the ages. Few details on the game are available as yet and no release date has been announced, although 2002 seems likely. We'll post more details as and when we get them.

WARZONE ONLINE

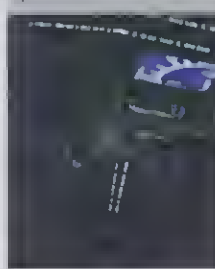
Based on the tabletop wargame of the same name, *Warzone Online: The Mutant Chronicles* is a 3D real-time strategy game where assembling your army is as important as commanding it. Before each battle, players spend their points on units, close-combat troops obviously



being essential in urban areas, and snipers and armour more suited to open maps. A base of units will ship with the game, which will be free to play. For extra more-advanced units however, there will be a fee. Check out www.paradoxplaza.com for more details.

3RD WORLD

The popularity of space combat seems to be on the rise again with news that another developer is mixing up space trading with new genres, this time roleplaying, to create *3rd World*. *3rd World* combines third-person *EverQuest*-style adventure with first-person space combat. On planets and space stations, players will take a view from behind their character, with the camera switching to the cockpit when in space. Players can join together and trade items or fight other 'clans', eventually building up their own trading empires and space stations.





URBAN TERROR

Quake III looks set to get real

Quake III has never pretended to be a realistic game and it has to be said that neither would we ever want it to be, but it seems that after *Counter-Strike* and the ever-popular slew of real-world tactical mods, it wouldn't be long until someone saw fit to do a *Quake III Counter-Strike*-a-like. There are in fact a few on the way, *Urban Terror* looking like it may well be the best.

Eight contemporary weapons will make it into *Urban Terror*, from sniper rifles and sub-machine

guns to pistols and a grenade launcher. Equipment such as laser sights and infra-red visors will complement each other and add to the realism. The game will sport locational and realistic falling damage, with wounds leaving blood trails until bandaged, à la *Action Half-Life*. Although lacking the features of *Counter-Strike*, *Urban Terror* does at least boast a superb graphics engine behind it. We have witnessed the game in action and the modelling and player movement is as realistic

as we have seen. Making use of *QIII Arena*'s special effects, such as reflective surfaces, adds new tactical elements as teams use mirrors to see around corners.

Although the first release of the mod is unlikely to turn *Counter-Strike* regulars traitor, given time we reckon *Urban Terror* may well develop into one of *Quake III*'s finest free add-ons. A beta featuring six weapons and maps will be made available soon from www.planetquake.com/siliconice.



Multiplayer gaming is big in Korea don'tcha know.



The Dome will soon be erupting with sounds of gunfire – and not before time.

BATTLE AT THE BIG TOP

Sign up quick to win US\$200,000

Starting on Saturday September 9 is the British Internet Gaming League London 2000 Tournament. Held at the Millennium Dome (obviously in another bid to increase attendance figures), the event is being sponsored by Korean electronics giants Samsung (www.samsung.com) and UK multiplayer specialists Barrysworld (www.barrysworld.com) and is being organised worldwide by Battletop (www.battletop.com), the Korean

parent company of the newly formed British Internet Gaming League. Similar tournaments are being held in Paris and Frankfurt, Asia and the US, with the winners from each event being flown to Seoul, Korea, for the World Cyber Game Challenge. The winner of the London event will be up for £15,000. The grand prize in Korea is a hefty US\$200,000 – well worth brushing up those skills in *Quake III*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Age Of Empires II* and *FIFA 2000* then.

With registration – which is completely free – ending on September 1, there are only a few days left for teams and individuals to get their names in. Spectators are of course welcome, and the entrance fee will be waived for the first 200 to register online. You can register and find out more information by visiting the website at: www.us.battletop.com/tournaments/london2000/register.htm

THE STONE

The game you wear around your neck

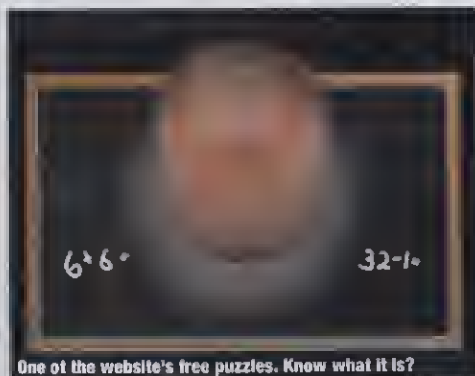
The Stone is probably the most bizarre online gaming concept we have come across so far, if only because after hours of investigation we still don't fully understand it. To participate you don't buy a CD from a games shop, you buy a pendant engraved with strange symbols (your very own stone). Apparently, one other person in the world is wearing a replica pendant, thus becoming your stone mate. It may sound like a millennial cult preparing for a mass suicide, and the website (www.thestone.com) is dark and cryptic enough to support that theory, but in reality, playing the game seems to involve solving bizarre

visual puzzles and obscure questions whose answers can only be found elsewhere on the Net, and even by looking for clues placed in real-world locations as you search for the answers to the ultimate enigma.

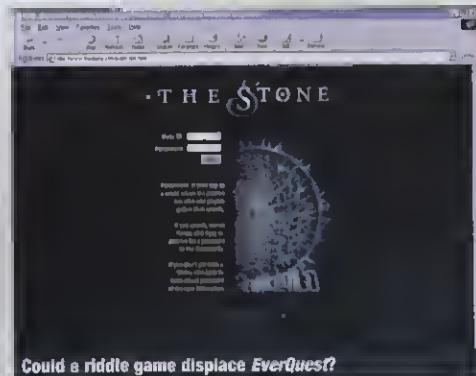
The Stone seems to be gathering a Scientology-style celebrity endorsement, with the likes of Jonathan Ross (who sleeps with his stone) and Keanu Reeves admitting to being massive fans. If nothing else, it shows the game is ready to reach a global mass-market audience.



The infamous stones come in a black box.



One of the website's free puzzles. Know what it is?



Could a riddle game displace EverQuest?

BIG WORLD: CITIZEN ZERO

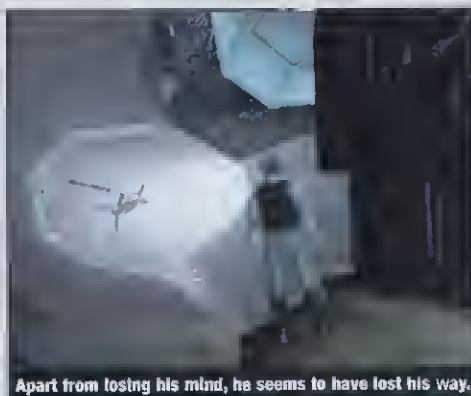
Who said RPGs can't be action-packed?

Thankfully you won't have to traverse this *Big World* on foot.

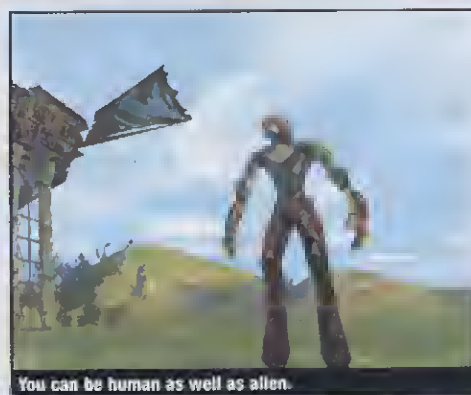


There is an interesting story behind Micro Forte's (developer of the newly announced *Fallout* game) online action RPG. Set across three harsh planets, players take the role of penal colonists, set free thanks to a riot organised by the planet's governing body. The catch is that prisoners shuttled in have all had their minds wiped apart, and as well as taking on missions and developing your character, the one aim behind *Citizen Zero* is to discover who you are and why you were imprisoned in the first place.

Like most role-playing games, *Citizen Zero* features a number of player classes, races and stats for you to choose from, but what sets it apart, besides the story, is the bias towards fast-paced action. The developers quote the PlayStation game *Syphon Filter* as being the influence behind the action and this together with the graphics mean that *Big World: Citizen Zero* could be a game to keep an eye on. Visit www.microforte.com.au for more information.



Apart from losing his mind, he seems to have lost his way.



You can be human as well as alien.

SEARCH ENGINE

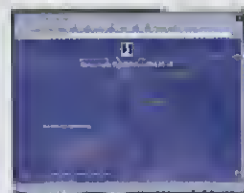
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER

Even though our favourite football management game can't be played online, there's still reason to go on the Net to expand and update your games. With numerous picture files and tactics editors available to enhance your enjoyment, there's plenty of life left in the old dog yet, even though the next incarnation of *Champ Man* is close to release. You can expect all the various fan sites to keep the *Championship Manager* cult going for years to come.

SPORTS INTERACTIVE

www.sportsinteractive.co.uk

Being the website of *Championship Manager*'s developer you'd have thought this site, which is as graphically appealing as the games themselves, would be pretty cut off from its numerous fansites. However, this is not the case, or at least it won't be very soon. On our last visit there wasn't much to see, but a new site is being developed as we speak and as soon as it is, it should be first on the list of appointments if you are in any way interested in finding out about the game. Publisher Eidos can be found at www1.eidosinteractive.co.uk.



THE DUG OUT

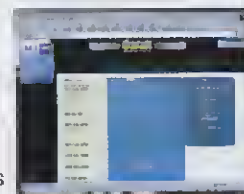
www.thedugout.net

According to our specialists and others in the know, *The Dug Out* is probably the best dedicated *Champ Man* website in the world. Well designed, it offers links, downloads, up-to-date news and forums, and in the future will even offer free email addresses for regular visitors. The forums are particularly good and if you have any questions, there are plenty of people to help you out.

CM3.COM

www.cm3.com

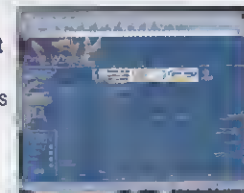
Being the official fansite of *Championship Manager*, this site is often first for news, straight from the horse's mouth as it were. Again, there's a fine spread of tactics and forums, but it falls short when it comes to downloads, but then being official, there are plenty of downloads that are frowned upon and so not hosted. Saying that, there are plenty of links and you can do a lot worse than use this as the first stop of your journey.



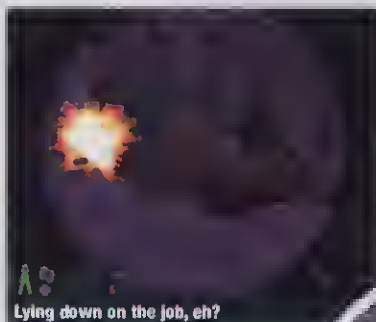
THE FINAL WHISTLE

www.final-whistle.net

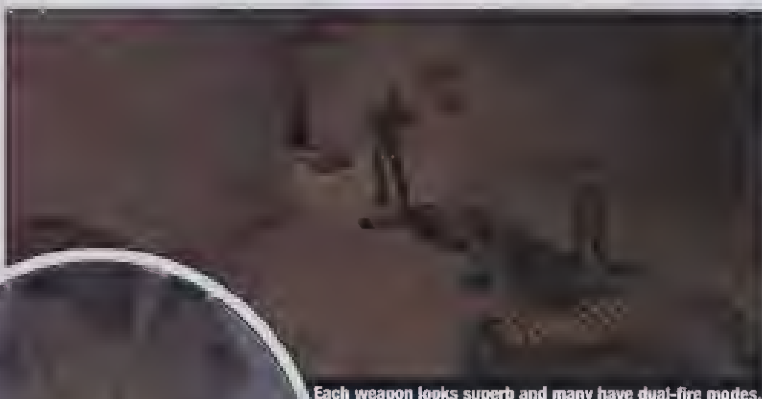
We like this one, primarily because it feels professional, but also because it features information, not only on the recent versions of *CM*, but also the original game as well. Well organised, it is updated regularly but there are a number of areas still under construction and without much in the way of reader support, it falls short of the comprehensiveness of *The Dug Out*. One to watch though.



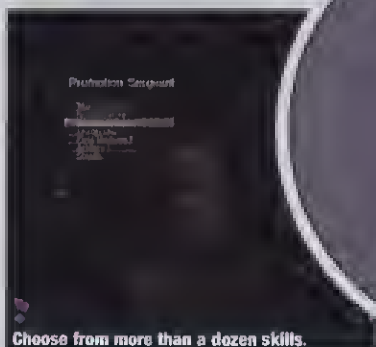
REVIEWS



Lying down on the job, eh?



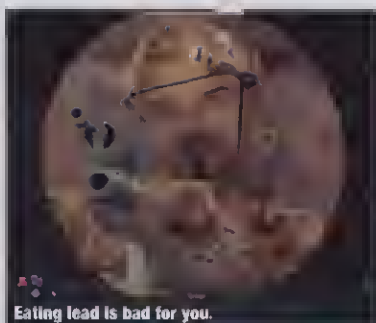
Each weapon looks superb and many have dual-fire modes.



Choose from more than a dozen skills.



He'll certainly be coming to earth with a bang.



Eating lead is bad for you.



This rifle is so heavy you need to crouch or lie down to fire it.

Character models and animations aren't quite up to *Counter-Strike's* standards, but they do the job well enough.



FIREARMS V2.2

★ Free from www.firearmsmod.com (40Mb) • Out now • Requires full version of *Half-Life*

Richie Shoemaker discovers that there is actually more to *Half-Life* than *Counter-Strike*



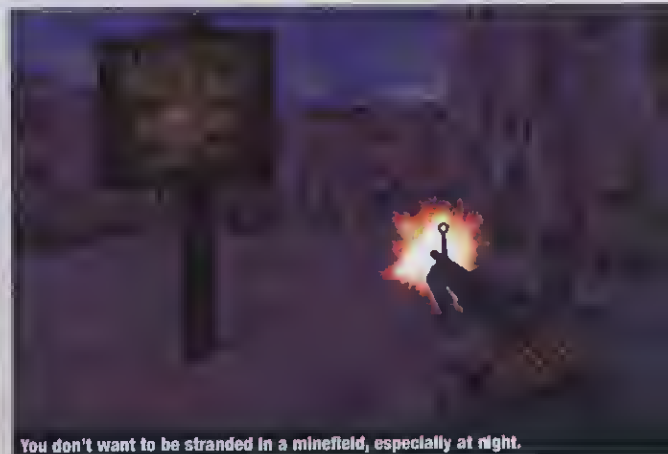
On the surface of it, *Firearms* may look and play like a less polished tribute to *Counter-Strike*, certainly it doesn't look quite as gritty or realistic, and on your first few online missions – if you've played *CS* in any great depth – you may even wonder why you are bothering at all. However, there are many people who are bothering (hundreds rather than

Counter-Strike's thousands) and if you'd care to put the time in, you'll soon find out why.

There is one fundamental difference between *Firearms* and *Counter-Strike*: whereas *CS* involves a small-arms conflict between two ideologically opposed teams, *Firearms* operates at a much grander scale – all-out war. This is aptly demonstrated by the weapons (which extend *Counter-Strike's*

range to include claymores mines and grenade launchers) and the maps, of which most simply require your team to capture and hold a number of strategic locations, ranging from bridges, towers, bunkers and buildings – set between the enemy base and yours. There are no civilians to get in your way and, unlike *CS*, when you die you respawn back at your base, until your side's reinforcements are used up, at which point those in limbo are left to watch the battle reach its conclusion and the war cycles round again.

In a nod to *Team Fortress*, *Firearms* favours a class-based system, of sorts. Rather than force you to pick from a number of predefined roles (although there are a few preset examples), you can effectively create your own. After you've joined a game and chosen sides, you're given a number of points to spend on equipment and armour. The choice for these items is far more varied than in *CS*, there are almost twice as many weapons and even three grades of armour that can be extended to protect your legs and arms as well as your head and body.



You don't want to be stranded in a minefield, especially at night.



Gun emplacements are useful, but they'd make you an easy target for an enemy sniper.

No matter how much armour you protect yourself with and no matter how big the weapon, you always run, walk or crawl like a snake on your belly (a feature *CS* could well do with) at the same speed. However, in *Firearms* it's not how fast you move that matters, but how far. Those weighed down by artillery and Kevlar will run out of stamina faster and will have to rest more often than their pistol-packing comrades. It's a novel idea and although the masses are divided on the issue, we rather liked it – even though there is a bug that lets you run backwards without breaking sweat.

Along with team-based objectives like the simple annihilation of the enemy, there's the incentive of developing skills. Taking control points on the map and racking up kills allows you to add new skills to your repertoire and even go up in rank. Choosing

'marksmanship' will improve your accuracy, 'stealth' will quieten your steps and 'field medicine' will mean you can heal others as well as yourself. 'Leadership' skills broaden your range of voice commands and there's an ability later on in the game that will allow you to build a mortar. Neat, huh?

There are other nice touches, too: one map has one team defending a fortified base, which means the other team has to

emplacements, watchtowers, trenches and mine fields – all of which make *Firearms* feel sufficiently different.

UNDER THE COUNTER

However, comparisons with *Counter-Strike* are unavoidable and any mod – especially one for *Half-Life* – pertaining to be realistic, is always going to be set alongside *Counter-Strike*'s far-reaching benchmark. Although

etc), they seem rather limp compared to *Counter-Strike*'s tense hostage rescue missions.

Unfortunately, by trying to capture conflict on such a scale, *Firearms* – limited by *Half-Life*'s ageing architecture rather than the mod itself – somehow feels too small. If it could accommodate 40 players, *Firearms* could certainly match up to its ambition. It's unfortunate that *Half-Life* can't cope with the numbers of people that this mod requires. Eight-player games are the smallest you'd want to get involved in and hopefully, in time, if enough people spread the word, dedicated *Firearms* servers will start to appear.

While there is the occasional bug and a few balancing issues to be ironed out, *Firearms* remains a remarkably complete game and one with a depth that is probably lost on a lot of people. While it has a small

dedicated bunch of fans, there are unfortunately too many people who try it and discard it as a poor *Counter-Strike* clone and never come back (we tried running a server in the office and many did just that). We wouldn't go as far as to say that you should abandon *CS* in favour of *Firearms*, but if you cared to give it some time you may find yourself warming to it. **PC**

“Along with team-based objectives like the simple annihilation of the enemy, there's also the incentive of developing skills”

parachute from the back of a plane. It sounds more exciting than it is (a slow, controlled fall from a great height, basically), but if you find your drop zone overrun by the enemy, those making their descent become sitting ducks. On other maps there are gun

there are dozens of maps, many of them offer much the same challenge over the same layout, albeit in a different setting, and while there are other game variations apart from those maps where you must fight for control of certain areas (find secret codes

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Innovative and distinct from *Counter-Strike* • Dozens of weapons to choose from

OWNERS Repetitive maps • Limited by *Half-Life*'s ageing code • *Counter-Strike* casts a long shadow

81 *Counter-Strike* meets *Team Fortress Classic* – with knobs on

VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE— REDEMPTION V1.1

★ £34.99 • Activision • Out now (patch from www.pczone.co.uk)

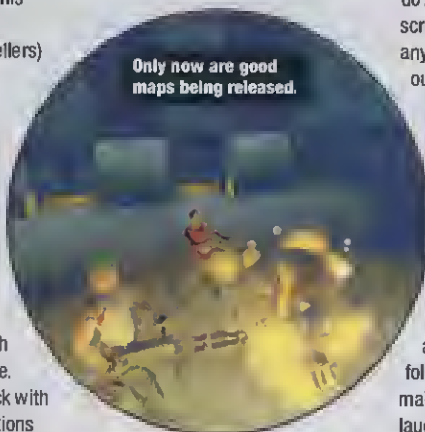
The longevity of *Vampire* was always going to be dependent on the multiplayer side of it. Two months after its release the jury is still out. Judge Jed Norton presides

Activision and Nihilistic were always aiming to grab the pen and paper Vampire fans – and hopefully subvert RPG fans from other series to *Vampire's* online cause. This hinged on the ability of gamesmasters (or storytellers) to produce exciting storylines and scenarios using the SDK – Software Developers Kit – from within *Vampire*.

The SDK was delayed, as were various add-ons, and it is only now that fans are able to start creating fresh content for *Vampire* online. Meanwhile, we were stuck with the somewhat limited options released with the boxed game and offered via WON net (www.won.net).

Approaching the game from a new player's perspective you are most likely to head to WON net to find a multiplayer game – and even though there are plenty

of people, the variety of games is limited. A number of people have been complaining about the WON service itself, although we didn't experience any problems – the v1.1 patch is essential.



SETTING UP CAMP

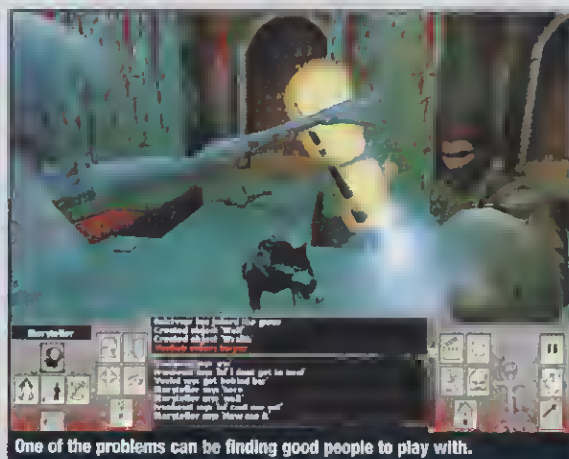
What does become immediately obvious are the two 'camps' who are playing – in the red corner the 'true RPG-ers' and in the blue the 'rest'. Ex-pen and paper Vamps even use a mod that closely

matches the rules to the paper-based original game and they often rabidly protect games from anybody not committed to good role-play. Unfortunately, this leaves the average Joe with a limited choice of games run by total beginners – creating a poor impression for those joining games for the first time.

A typical newbie game consists of the storyteller (ST) bumbling around asking "How do I do X, Y and Z" while everyone else screams at them for not doing anything. Ultimately, people drop out and rush to another game, and the process repeats.

If you're lucky enough to get into a 'pro' game (even just one of the pre-set scenarios) the differences are immediately obvious. The game goes from a stuttering comedy of errors to a smooth, almost bookish atmosphere – some of these folks are pretty damn good! Our main problem was refraining from laughing at ye olde Englishe, which seems to be *de rigeur* in these games.

Guild sites and virtual cities are starting to expand the boundaries of *Vampire's* online game, but it's slow going. Activision has helped by releasing new skins and aim to do more,



“Guild sites and virtual cities are starting to expand the boundaries of *Vampire's* online game, but it's slow going”

along with updates to the SDK, but the ultimate success or failure still rests with the gamer and is undecided.

Certainly, if you drop into a game expecting a quick bit of role-playing fun, you are likely to be disappointed. Player vs player (PvP) is ironically the best option for a quick game at the moment; to taste the real thing you are better off tagging onto a guild, finding people you get on with and approaching the game from that angle rather than plunging stake-first onto WON net and praying for deliverance. [X]

PCZVERDICT

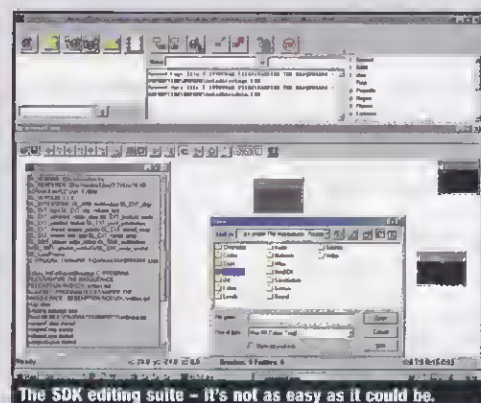
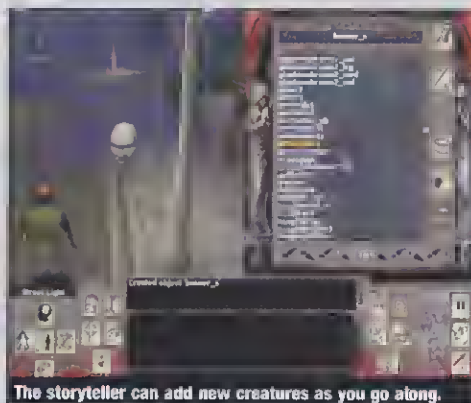
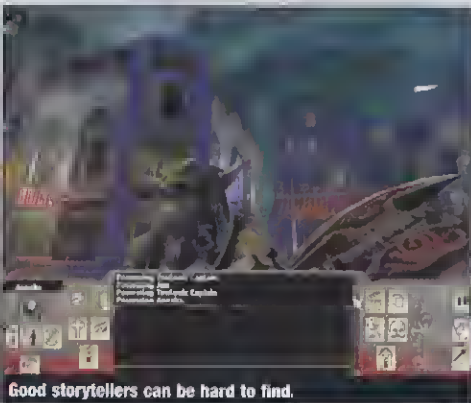
UPPERS Gorgeous graphics •

Established and enthusiastic player base from pen 'n' paper days
• Teaching Yanks what 'bollocks' means

DOWNERS Lots of badly run games

Few really good ones • Some issues with connectivity/WON net • Developing slowly due to SDK delays

70 Can be like getting blood out of a stone



ROCKET ARENA 3

★ Free download from: www.planetquake.com/quake3/ • Out now

A mod that's not Counter-Strike? Dave Woods is entirely unconvinced

Go to a half-decent pub on a Friday night and you'll witness one of the oldest and most popular rituals being played out. Clustered around a pool table you'll find a group of people eagerly waiting their turn to challenge the champion in a one-on-one elimination match. If you win, the satisfaction is two-fold. First off, you get to stay on the table and challenge the next wannabe. Second, and more importantly, you get the satisfaction of knocking your opponent off the table and down to the boffom of the list of challengers. It's simple stuff, winner stays on, but it's a winning formula and one that's repeated in the ever-popular *Rocket Arena*, now available for *Quake III*.

“The simplicity of the mod means you can just jump straight in without running the risk of getting flamed”

In essence, *RA* is pure one-on-one deathmatching. Take two fighters, put them in a purpose-built arena, give them all the usual *Quake III* weapons and tuck ammo to start off, and then see who's left standing at the end. There are no pick-ups and no power-ups – what you're given at the start is what you've got until you kill or are killed yourself. The winner stays on for the next round and the loser joins the boffom of the pile of challengers/spectators and waits for his turn to come round again.

Simple stuff, but highly effective. For one you know that when you're knocked out you're going to have to wait to get back on. And that's no fun. Two, you know that a load of other people are watching your pathetic demise, which makes losing a doubly bitter pill to swallow. The simplicity of the mod also means that whatever your knowledge base, you can just jump straight in and play without running the risk of getting flamed or abused for not playing the game 'properly'. This is bolstered by an interface

**PCZONE
AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE**

that makes finding active servers as easy as switching on your PC.

The *RA3* download is a whopping 60Mb (it will be on our next cover CD), this is because the custom maps have been created specifically for the mod. Almost without exception these feel like they've been created by *RA* veterans and consist of small one-on-one arenas and larger team-based affairs (these follow the basic rules of one-on-one play).

Another bonus is the addition of a built-in

MP3 player. There's a few banging dance tracks included by default but you can drop your own in and frag to your own sounds. It's hardly a major selling point, but it's a nice touch and indicative of the level of professionalism that's evident across the board.

At the end of the day, *Rocket Arena 3* is just *Quake III*. The difference is, death has a consequence this time (get to the back of the line, schmucko) and without any pick-ups the normally frenetic *Quake III* is even faster and more reliant on reflexes and quick thinking. Top stuff indeed. **[A+]**

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Excellent maps • Pure one-on-one deathmatch • Built-in MP3 player • Winner stays on
DOWNERS Nothing

89 Does exactly what you want it to, and a little bit more

Look it's Nameslees Ones. Kill him before he sets up camp.

Railguns dominate – as you'd expect in a one-on-one.

Get yourself into position before the fight begins.

Behind you!!!!

A class *Quake III* mod that's not called *Jailbreak*. Finally.



**AT THE END OF THE SEASON
WHICH CUP WILL YOU BE DRINKING FROM?**



This is the cutting-edge of football management. Conquer 7 of Europe's most competitive leagues. Hone your squad with the new Data Editor. Then watch your strategy unfold on the pitch through the 3D Match Engine. Football Manager 2001 - your cup runneth over.



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PLANETARION

Free at www.planetaron.com • Available now

Stunning graphics, blinding action and superb cut-scenes – Planetarion has none of these. So why are 30,000 gamers hooked on this DIY sci-fi game? Jed Norton finds out

So there you are pottering away on an online game for fun when the games company you work for goes bust. Suddenly the out-of-hours fun becomes your only prospect and Planetarion is born. The three guys responsible for this online empire-building game all hail from Norway and only had one PC to work on, yet still managed to find investors.

Six to ten months of work were behind the first release

comprise most of the players, one of whom had this to say of the game: "It's so simple for the casual player yet has so much personality and so many nuances for the hardcore gamer to master..."

BUT WHAT IS IT?

Planetarion is essentially a sci-fi multi-user dungeon (MUD). Web based, it allows you to login and play as the 'owner' of a planet, researching, resourcing and fighting your way to domination of your local

science. The words 'free', 'simple' and 'fun' are really all you need to know about this game. It isn't a 'front line' game, nor is it something you'll use to amaze your mates, but in this age of card-busting luscious graphics it does prove that looks aren't everything.

Try it – there's nothing to download, registration is via email and connection speed isn't an issue at all. It's an ideal way to blow some time at work and have a bit of fun. If you want to sign up, or get more info, head to www.planetaron.com (click a few banner-ads to help fund the game), or head to irc.uk.planetaron.com (#planetarion) for chat and support. You may even find yourself playing it from home in-between those Counter-Strike sessions. [A]

"It won't amaze your mates, but in this age of card-busting luscious graphics it does prove that looks aren't everything"

(version 2 came out in July) and from a handful of players they now boast more than 30,000 gamers – what's even more impressive is the whole community that has grown around the game. Support can be found via IRC – in fact, five servers all funnel into the main channel, where 17 helpful chaps run the support and chat, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and all for the love of it. One such chap introduced me to the very friendly crowd that compose Planetarion gamers: Yanks, Aussies, lots of Brits and of course a fair few Norgies

galaxy, cluster and universe. Based around 'turns' that occur every hour, this game is NOT fast – but it has a charm and subtle addiction that is a pleasant change of pace. It really is incredibly simple to play and what's more it's free. It's also easy to hide from the boss at work as it runs within a browser and looks a bit like a spreadsheet!

The game includes aspects of resource management, strategic battles, politics, alliances, elections and more – OK, all of these are damn simplistic, but it isn't supposed to be rocket-

PCZVERDICT

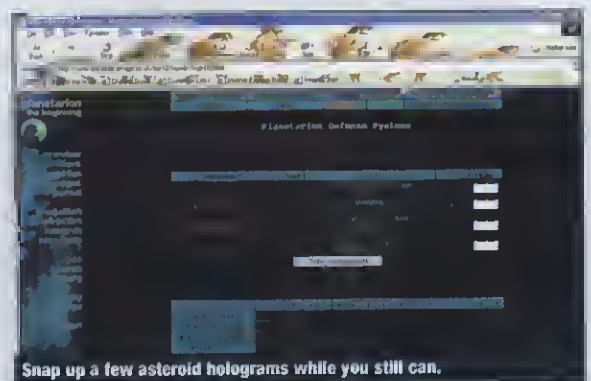
UPPERS No downloads • Put one over on your boss • Great fan "community" and support

DOWNERS Not exactly speedy gameplay • Not as deep as some would like • Graphical it isn't

72 Simple, fun and free

War Academy Enables War Engine	Crystal Refinery Extracts 1000 crystal per hour	Tractor Beams	Unit Patterns Enables Unit Scan	EMP Recharger Enables EMP Turret
Plasma Weapons	Super Fuel	Science Centre Enables Thief	Wave Filter Enables POS Scan	Enhanced Targeting
War Factory Enables Destroyer	Ethium Mine Extracts 1000 ethium per hour	Cloaking Device Enables Phantom	Communication	Plasma Turret Control Enables Plasma Turrets
Capital Hubs	Core Resources Disables Ion Technology	Tractor Beam Amplifier Enables PPS	Decryption Centre Enables News Scan	Wave Absorption
Starliner Factory Enables War Cruiser	Core Mine Extracts 1000 of each resource per hour Enables Dagger	EMP Amplifier Enables Toranitus Disables Super Capital Chassis	Cloak Detection Disables Hyperspace	Anti Wave Center Enables Wave Absorbers
Super Capital Chassis Disables EMP Amplifier		Advanced Cloaking Centre Enables Ghost	Ethium Scope Core Enables Military Scan	Ion Technology Disables Core Resources
Battleship Factory Enables Battleship				Ion Turret Control Enables Ion Turrets
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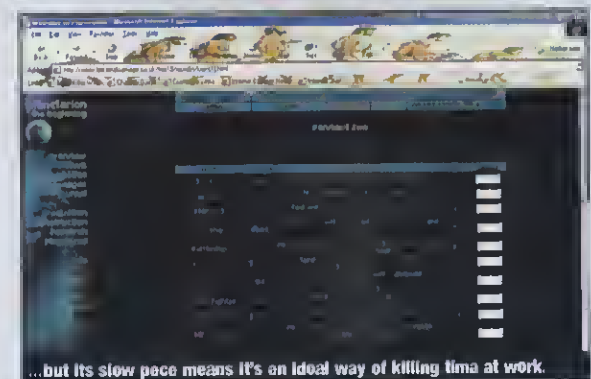
It looks like a spreadsheet, but at least that means it won't attract the attention of your boss.



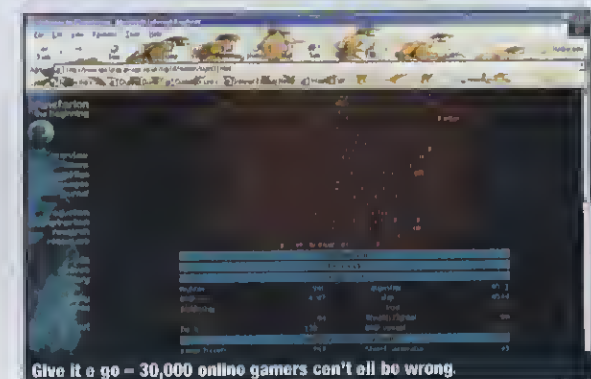
Snap up a few asteroid holograms while you still can.



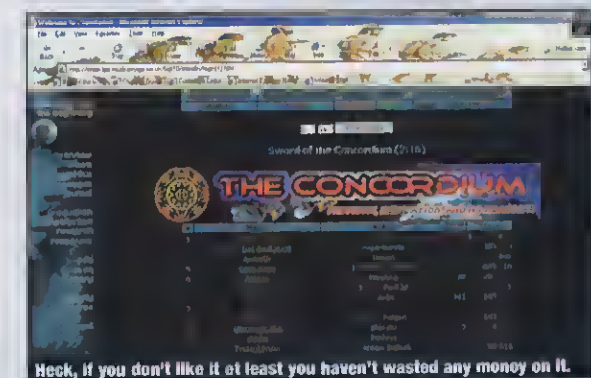
OK, so it's not exactly Quake III...



...but its slow pace means it's an ideal way of killing time at work.



Give it a go – 30,000 online gamers can't all be wrong.





Heck, if you don't like it at least you haven't wasted any money on it.


c: Netscape Online

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For those who can put up with the interface, an epic experience awaits.

MANKIND V1.6

★ Free (limited version) download from www.mankind.net • US\$49 for unlimited access • Out now

Tony Lamb checks out two new online hopefuls

As an update to French developer Vibes's ambitious-but-flawed 3D space-based real-time strategy game *Mankind*, version 1.6 faced an uphill struggle. After the faults in the game's previous incarnation (you may still find the dreadful version 1.0 selling in some stores), an improvement was definitely called for.

Initial impressions were favourable. The game website, although still chock-

full of minor spelling and grammatical errors is at least legible. It boasts of a massively multiplayer, persistent online strategy game with a multitude of worlds to be explored, battles to be won and lots of trading on the side. Installing it was a doddle and logging-on is easy and quick. It's all very stable and can run in a window rather than full screen.

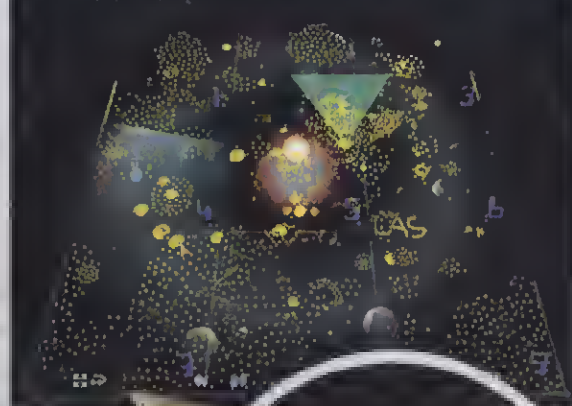
Unfortunately, learning how to play *Mankind* was where it all went horribly downhill. The errors in

translating the game from French to English could be excused if the online manual was any help. Sadly, it isn't, and not being blessed with telepathic powers made trial and error the order of the day. The user interface is a gruesome mixture of icons, menus and wild guesswork that will put off all but the most enthusiastic fans of the genre. For a game this involved to be lumbered in this way is almost criminal.

The gameplay is more advanced than the familiar

There is an incredible array of worlds to be explored.

Environment • Region 140 • 4115, System Trace Action, Space



This game is not one for the hardcore adrenaline junkie.

RTS blend of base-building, mining and general fisticuffs, due to the *Elite*-style moving and trading between almost a billion planets, each with its own geography and its own resources. Don't expect adrenaline-fuelled slaughter though – you'll almost go grey waiting – but if depth, immersion in a huge alien environment and the idea of forming allegiances with your fellow gamers appeals to you then you should find something to your liking. [C]

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS RTS on an epic scale •

• Very stable

DOWNERS Hideously complicated

interface • Dodgy translations •

Online-only manual

42 Scary for all the wrong reasons

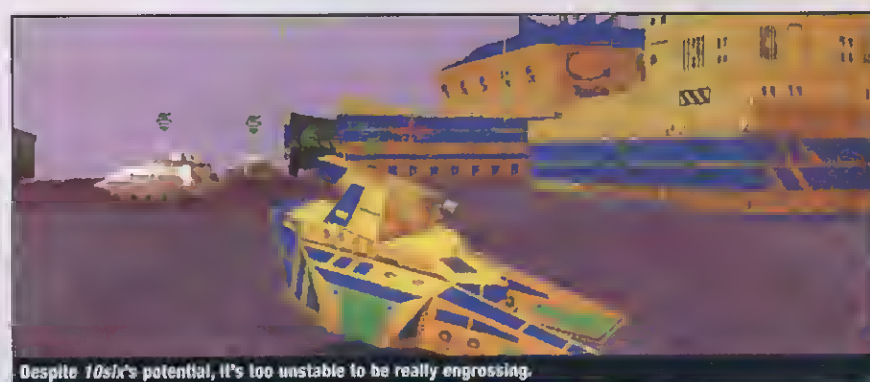
10SIX

★ Free download from www.heat.net/10sixchannel • Available now

This game proudly bills itself as a "massively multiplayer, one million player game". It's certainly not short of ambition. The *10six* website is impressive enough, there seem to be a lot of people who like it, and the possibilities are huge. Sadly, however, the game has more bugs than a village pond. In fact, after several lock-ups and lots of cursing, five minutes in the *10six* chatrooms spoke volumes. The few "Addictive!" and "Best game ever!" comments were matched by "Why pay for a game with more bugs than most betas?" and

"Play, crash! Play, crash!" as one user put it. Hardly promising!

The plot is nothing new – stake your claim, mine your ore, defend your claim and murder thy neighbour – but the subscription concept is refreshing. You get to try the game free for two weeks and then decide whether to pay to keep playing. Assuming you have a rock-solid PC, the patience of Buddha and lots of free Internet access then you might eventually find out that the graphics aren't too bad, the range of construction options quite varied (both for buildings and for weaponry), and there's



Despite 10six's potential, it's too unstable to be really engrossing.

quite a well conceived RTS lurking behind the software's suicidal tendencies.

If persistent online strategy games are just your type of thing then you could do worse than *10six*. The two weeks of free play should give you the opportunity to fix most hardware conflicts (the developers thoughtfully provide a list of them), and, of course, it won't have cost you a bean. [C]

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Free for two weeks •

Potentially huge

DOWNERS Slow to log on • Makes

Fred West look stable • Steep

learning curve

59 One for the patient devotee only



A very big gun. Yesterday.

We move the information that moves your world.

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Available from Action Computer Supplies, Dabs Direct, Insight, Micro Warehouse, PC World, Simply Computers, Software Warehouse or from your local computer software reseller.

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* Estimated street price, subject to change without notice.

IRC CLIENTS

With the arrival of instant messaging, many people thought IRC would die. Instead it's become more popular than ever. **Phil Wand** joins the gabfest

Internet Relay Chat (IRC) is without doubt the easiest way to chat and exchange files with other people. You don't need to register for a username and password, and the software you need to do it is a cinch to install and use. Unlike related products such as ICQ and Yahoo Instant Messenger, IRC clients hook into servers that are

supported by communities and not faceless American organisations. They're also usually focused on the task at hand and won't clutter your view with reminders, organisers, and pop-up lifestyle surveys when you log on.

So what should you look for when choosing an IRC client? To start with, it needs to be simple to

use. Most people aren't interested in doing much else besides talking and downloading the odd file. It also needs to be well supported. Once you've got used to IRC, you'll find there are many scripts and plug-ins that work with your client to enhance the experience. And of course it needs to be secure, customisable, and powerful.

SOFTWARE
ROUND UP

REVIEWS

MIRC 5.6

mIRC is dead easy to set up, meaning you can know sod all about IRC and still get straight onto a server and chatting. It's very lean and fast – it fires up and logs on in less than three seconds – and it feels bullet-proof. The interface is designed in such a way as to be inviting but at the same time powerful, meaning newbies can get straight into chatting without wading through large amounts of checkboxes and option screens; old hands will be able to dig into mIRC's preferences and customise the way they talk. However, the program doesn't quite have enough meat to it, and other clients such as Visual IRC do more to make you feel as if you're in control.

Who: mIRC Co Ltd

Where: www.mirc.co.uk

Pros: Quick • Easy to use • Intuitive • Well supported

Cons: A bit lean • Arcane slash-driven command set

Cost: US\$20

Score: ★★★★★

PIRCH98

PIRCH98 isn't quite as easy to use nor as rapid as arch rival mIRC. It's certainly packed full of features, including an automated events editor that allows you to react to events without your fingers touching the keyboard (so you could, for example, respond with a word or phrase whenever someone comes or goes), and like Visual IRC comes with a powerful scripting language. The downside to all this is an interface that's a little too complex for its own good. Most people won't go near its more intricate features, and many will be put off by the fact that it's no longer supported by its developer.

Who: Northwest Computer Services

Where: www.pirchat.com

Pros: Powerful • For serious IRC players

Cons: Unsupported • Excessive

Cost: US\$20

Score: ★★★★★

OUR
CHOICE

VIIRC97

Visual IRC is a little-known client used mainly for its ability to maintain concurrent connections to multiple IRC servers. In short, you can connect

to more than one place at once, and thus appear to be omnipresent. Like PIRCH98, it includes a decent scripting language, enabling users to respond to specific events in the chat room (it even integrates VBScript and JavaScript), and like mIRC you can create aliases of one or more IRC commands to save on the typing. Many of its features are easier to find and seemingly more useful than mIRC, the look and feel of the interface is fully customisable, and with key functions wrapped up in accessible right-click context menus, it's the only way to chat.

Who: Adrian Cable

Where: www.megalith.co.uk/virc

Pros: Fast • Slick • Easy • Free • Support for multiple servers

Cons: Needs an update • No installer/uninstaller

Cost: Freeware

Score: ★★★★★

XIRCON

Like mIRC, the XIRCON Interface is a simple affair. It's not quite as straightforward to jump in and get chatting as it is with other clients, because there are no default servers set up. If you're a power user this is no problem, but if you're jumping in for the first time, empty windows and unpopulated list boxes are a little daunting. Tellingly, the author hasn't updated the product for more than three years now, and it's still in its beta stages of development. This makes it very difficult to recommend as a serious IRC client for modern IRC users.

Who: Mark Hanson

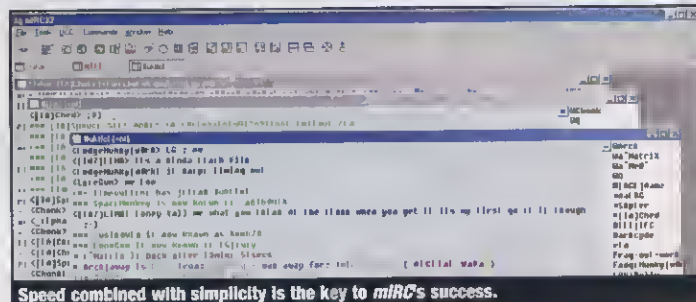
Where: www.xircon.com

Pros: Well-structured interface • Free

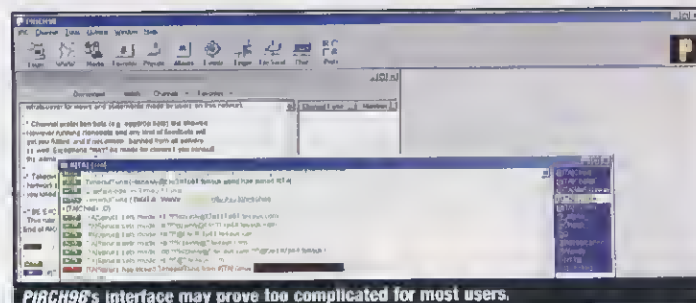
Cons: Obsolete • Lacking functionality

Cost: Freeware

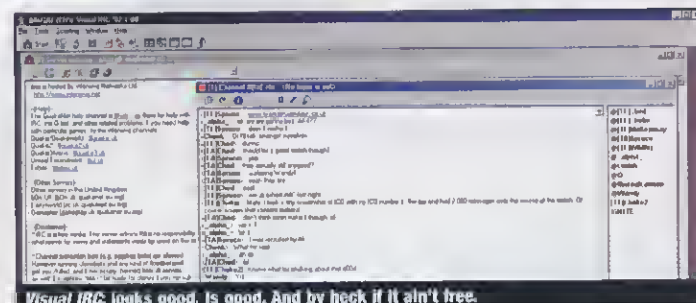
Score: ★★★★★



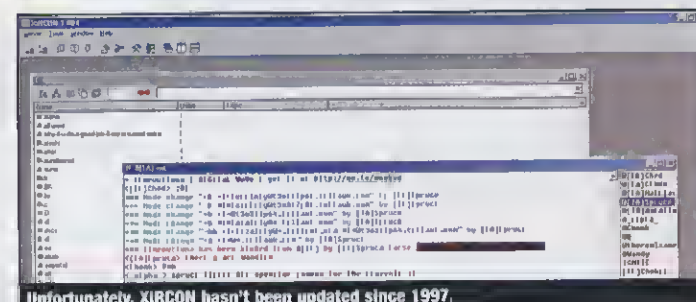
Speed combined with simplicity is the key to mIRC's success.



PIRCH98's interface may prove too complicated for most users.



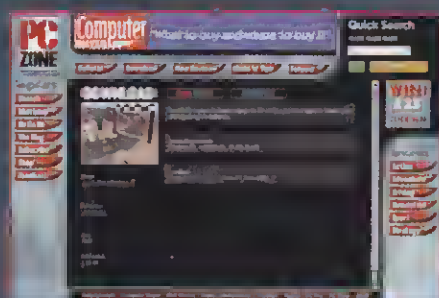
Visual IRC looks good. Is good. And by heck if it ain't free.



Unfortunately, XIRCON hasn't been updated since 1997.



Reviews and ratings for
100s of top games



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demos and patches



Hints and Tips to perfect
your gaming technique

WARNING! Serious PC Games Zone

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THE CAR NEWS WEEKLY

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PCZONE

RESIDENT EVIL II
The FULL 18 Rated Bonus

Hints 'n' Tips
A helping hand is here

Ha Ha Ha
The Cyberwata online

Edited by Gareth Rankway

UPDATED DAILY

Tab Raider III
The best Tab Raider event!

Intel: The Dark Project
A breath of fresh air

3Dix Announce Partners
for Yookee 3

Sony Sx Connectix
Sony's new emulator

New N64 Emulator
New perfect emulation, unbelievable

Commandos: BITCOD
Demo

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DAILY AT
3.30PM**

COUNTER-STRIKE STARTER'S GUIDE

So you're ca-ca at *Counter-Strike*? Phil Wand shows you how to get ahead in the online world of team terrorism

Coming from *Quake* or *Unreal Tournament*, *Counter-Strike* is a rude awakening. There are no health packs. No quad damage. You pay for your shooter and you pay for your ammo. If you catch a bullet in the wrong place, you keel over and die horribly. And there are no respawn rooms.

Tough? Yes, but we know what it's like to be a newbie. Here we show you how to get ahead when you're wet behind the ears.

1. THE TOOLS

Don't pick weapons randomly. Acquaint yourself with three, perhaps four, guns and get to know them well: their ammo capacity, reload times, effectiveness through walls. If you can't afford the gun you're after, wait until the next round. Handing over moolah for a bad gun that you don't know is going to leave you dead – and skinf.

2. KNOW HOW TO FIRE THEM

Remember that guns such as the Colt M4A1 Carbine will 'rapid fire' if you simply hold the trigger down. But stay away from such tactics when using artillery like the AK-47: don't let more than four or five rounds fly in any one go as your arm will waggle and your aim along with it.

3. BUY GRENADES

Don't go throwing grenades in confined spaces, as often they'll simply bounce back and blow your knees off. Jump when you throw and they'll travel further. If you're using a concussion grenade, make sure you're ahead of your team mates before you lob it. Always keep a smoke grenade to hand; if you find yourself pinned down by unseen snipers, throw it close and make your break.

4. STAY ALIVE

Before scuttling off to find yourself a target, think. Don't walk into the middle of an open area. Move

from cover to cover – from box to box, pillar to pillar – whatever. And keep checking behind you. Do everything slowly: *very* slowly. Hold down the SHIFT key to walk and you'll not make footsteps. Hold CTRL when climbing ladders. Remember that audio is crucial to *Counter-Strike* tactics, and if you stomp around like a splayfooted rhino you'll end up on the mortuary slab. Use headphones if you have them; you can play all night without waking your beloved and you'll hear better, too.

5. PLAY EVERY MAP AND EVERY TEAM

It's a big mistake to stick to one team and one fave map. Sure, everyone loves Militia, but play it constantly as Terrorists and you'll never know what makes the Counter Terrorists tick – where they appear, where their cover is, and so on. Learn all the maps and pick your teams randomly.

6. CAMP AND SNIPE

Sit still and wait for the enemy to come to you. It's frowned upon in titles such as *Quake* and *Half-Life*, but in *Counter-Strike* it's a way of life. Ignore the shouts of "Camper!" from clueless newbies. Think about it: if you really were a Terrorist, would you tackle your opponents head on or would you sit still with a sighted rifle and pick them off one by one?

7. PRACTICE

The only way to become really good is to play the game often. To stay ahead of others you need to be deadly accurate with shots across all distances. And remember to go for the head: shots to the bonce are likely to be deadly.

MORE TIPS

www.counter-strike.net is, of course, the 'official' *Counter-Strike* site and from there you'll find CS Nation (<http://csnation.counter-strike.net>), which offers articles on maps, weapons and equipment and general guides. Other sites worth a visit include: www.csuniverse.com and www.counter-strike.org. Happy hunting. [EZ]



Always look both ways before crossing in front of an armed terrorist.



CTs should invest in a defuse kit for the 'bomb' missions.



The AK-47 is a jumpy little bugger, short controlled bursts are effective.



No less than a man wearing a bandana deserves.

GADGETS

An intriguing round-up of all the latest hardware, good and bad, together with five of the best new movie releases on DVD...

PORTABLE MP3 DISC PLAYER

£149 • JEDAN • (020) 8668 0016
• www.jedan.co.uk

The MP3 revolution continues apace with this latest contraption. The imaginatively titled Portable MP3 Disc Player is actually a CD-Walkman type affair, with a natty trick under the cover.

Along with standard audio CDs, it can play standard MP3 files cut onto CDRs, which means you can cram about ten albums onto one disc. Handy if you're the sort that gets bored with music easily but can't be arsed to carry your entire music collection around with you. Handy also if you're not bothered about the law in this country and spend your time in the office downloading legions of free MP3 albums.

It comes with a decent set of headphones and a power supply, and it can chuck out a decent sound with plenty of bass. Two big problems though. The first is that the unit itself, despite the cost, is cheap and nasty, with a sort of urine-coloured hue to the cover. Secondly, if you've got a CD burner (which you'll need to cut your own MP3s) then you're going to be better off cutting them to standard audio CDs which you can use anywhere. Add those two points together and ask yourself whether you still want to spend £150. ★★☆☆☆



INTERTRAX TRACKER

£999 • Z-net • (01425) 629888
• www.z-net.co.uk

Virtual headsets are threatening to make a comeback. With recent advances in this technology, gamers can now experience something close to the action they get from normal gaming, but in a true virtual world that takes them away from the humdrum of daily life and thrusts them into an alternative existence, immersing them in a near out-of-body experience. I am of course lying. They've always been pants and this one is no exception. If watching your games on a very small square screen in 640 x 480 resolution appeals to you then you are clearly very strange. Add to this the inexplicable 'weirdness' of having a funny hat on your head which all sane people will laugh at as they walk by, and the future is not looking good for the InterTrax Tracker. And it gets worse. The Tracker retails at £999 (although you can apparently buy it on the Internet for US\$400, you do the maths) and you will need a card with a TV-Out socket to use the thing in the first place, adding more to the cost if you don't have one of the latest graphic cards. Let's be honest, it's crap. ★★☆☆☆

DVDS

JAWS

Certificate: 12

£19.99 • Universal • Out now

For a film that defined an era, revolutionised a genre and turned the sea into an abyss of horror for millions of swimmers, *Jaws* has been constantly vilified by 'serious' cinema critics. Dismissed as a stupid monster movie that relies on shocks rather than talent, such a narrow view fails to appreciate the genius of Spielberg's directing, the perfection of the cast and the unforgettable soundtrack. Especially considering the amount of problems the film ran into during production. Psychologically, we needed a film like *Jaws* to embody all our primal fears, the darkness that lies beneath the surface, if only to watch them explode into a myriad of pieces of shark steak at the end. This special edition has an incredible amount of extras, making it an absolutely essential purchase.

Extra Features: 'Making Of' documentary • Deleted scenes • Outtakes • 720 photos • Trivia game • Screensavers • Trailers

★★★★★



**DVD
OF THE MONTH**

SLEEPY HOLLOW

Certificate: 15

£19.99 • 20th Century Fox • Out now

Set in 1799, Johnny Depp plays Ichabod Crane in this horror/murder/mystery from the director of *Batman*. The film-noir style merges with a child-like fantasy feel, and perfectly reflects the world of Washington Irving's classic tale, *The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow*. Special effects are excellent and the storyline gripping. *Sleepy Hollow* occasionally suffers from corny dialogue, but with seven special features on the DVD it's worth checking out.

Extra Features: Two theatrical trailers • Director's commentary • Photo gallery • 'Behind The Legend' documentary

★★★★★



BATTLE-PAK£59.99 • Farallon • (01494) 532734 • www.farallon.com/uk/battlepak

Multiplayer gaming is the way forward, and with ADSL on the horizon, fast, lag-free play with people across the world is going to be a reality very soon. In the meantime, the best option is to set up a home network.

If you've got a few PCs lying around the house (ie if you're a bunch of lazy students), or you can persuade your mates to bring theirs round to yours, you can easily set one up. The Battle-Pak provides a five-port hub and two network cables to get you started, along with a smattering of demos to try out, including *Quake III*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Age of Empires 2* and *Starsiege Tribes*.

Strangely enough though, there are no network cards in the box. Farallon say this is because it wants to keep the cost to a minimum for those of you who've already got network cards in your machine. It seems a strange decision, although you can get cheap cards (under £30 each from the same source).

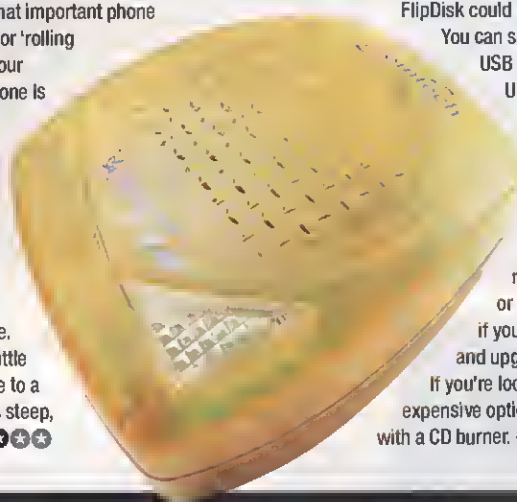
As long as you've got these cards in your machine the rest of the installation is easy. We had the thing out of the box and working within minutes. If you haven't got network cards then we'd seriously suggest investigating the possibility of getting a high-speed connection installed between your PC and the rest of the world. A five-port hub like this isn't going to get you anywhere in the massively multiplayer world of *Counter-Strike*. ★★☆☆☆

**INTERNET ALERT 510**£29.99 (plus £2.95 p&p) • Comtech • (01942) 851800 • www.classco.com

How annoying is it when you are on the Internet and someone calls you and your connection bombs out? (Call-waiting nightmares.) Or you miss that important phone call because you're halfway through downloading 'screenshots' or 'rolling demos' (or at least that's what you tell the missus). Well this is your saviour, a small orange thing that beeps and flashes when someone is calling. If you pick up the phone, your connection is terminated and you can speak freely, or, you can ignore the fact that a relative is trying to tell you Great Aunt Myrtle has popped her clogs to join the choir invisible and continue on your journey across the ever-expanding Internet. Simple.

Setting it up is easy: there are no drivers to install and it's just a case of plugging your phone and modem in the back and the Alert into the phone socket. In our tests it worked fine and although it looks like a squashed orange, it's quite small and cute.

However, because you can disable call waiting there seems little point in owning such a device, especially if you intend to upgrade to a high-speed ADSL service when it becomes available. £30 seems steep, although it's cheaper than installing a second phone line. ★★☆☆☆

**FLIPDISK**£299 • Amacom • (020) 8993 7373 • www.amacom-tech.com

Hard drives in any shape or form are usually the duller bits of hardware known to man. Not the FlipDisk though. With its translucent blue plastic covering, and the ability to store 6Gb (or up to a whopping 25Gb if you've got the cash to flash) inside something that can fit in your pocket, the FlipDisk could almost be considered cool.

You can slot it straight into a laptop, or onto your desktop PC via USB or the heart-breakingly slow and clunky parallel port.

Use the first two modes of connection and you don't have to use an extra power source. If you're relying on parallel then you need to use the power cable pass-through in your keyboard port. This is still an acceptable solution as it means you don't have to lug around an external power source.

Something like this is never going to provide transfer rates equal to your internal drives, but using PCMCIA or USB the going is fair to middling. Parallel is slow, but if you haven't got USB yet you ought to save your money and upgrade your PC instead.

If you're looking for pocket-sized storage this is a flashy and expensive option. All things considered, you might be better off with a CD burner. ★★☆☆☆

BUY ONLINE FROM WWW.BLACKSTAR.CO.UK WWW.CO.UK**STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT**

Certificate: 12

£19.99 • Paramount • Out now

If after reading our review of *Star Trek: Voyager – Elite Force* on page 58 you're still hankering for more adventures with the Borg, you could do a lot worse than buy *First Contact*, which, although not the best *Star Trek* film released so far, can certainly claim to be the strongest of the three to star *The Next Generation* crew. Expect loads of special effects-laden scenes, some typically corny, others more spectacular. Where the package is let down is with what's missing. No doubt Paramount is holding out the documentaries for the inevitable *Star Trek* boxed set that'll be out in time for Christmas.

Extra Features: Teaser trailer • Theatrical trailer ★★☆☆☆

**BRINGING OUT THE DEAD**

Certificate: 18

£19.99 • Warner Home Video • Out now

From the same writer/director team that brought you *Taxi Driver*, comes another depressing look at the streets of New York. This time around it's Nicolas Cage's turn to see that almost everything stinks on the streets, but even though his performance as a tortured paramedic is strong, he's no De Niro. Scorsese's cinematography is beyond reproach, as usual, and if you're a film buff this is genuinely unmissable despite the fact it doesn't come close to his other masterpieces or contain any extra material of any note.

Extra Features: Short feature ★★☆☆☆

**DEMONS**

Certificate: 18

£19.99 • OVD 2000 • Out now

Part of the Dario Argento collection, *Demons* is actually directed by protégé Lamberto Bava, but don't let this put you off. *Demons* is a no-holds-barred schlock-fest, with a film-within-a-film premise giving way to a cinema full of bloodthirsty demons. It's pretty nasty in places, although the censors have had their way with it. If only they'd decided to take the most offensive part out: Go West's contribution to the soundtrack. For dedicated horror fans.

Extra Features: Audio commentary from Lamberto Bava • Theatrical trailer • 'Behind The Scenes' segment

★★★☆☆



ANYBODY OUT THERE?

CLUTCHING AT STRAWS Mark Hill



I'm developing this revolutionary theory about columns. Specifically columns written by a man scratching his head. Even more

specifically, columns written by a man scratching his head that are next to a load of cheats. My theory is that no one ever reads them. Alright, so it might not seem all that revolutionary to begin with. I mean, lists of cheats are hardly the stuff hard-hitting journalism is made of, so a column talking about them isn't going to absorb readers in any meaningful way. But think about it. That means that I can write what I want; I can insult people in high-ranking places without fear of retaliation, or I can pull apart the establishment without fear of incarceration. There's just one drawback though. If no one reads it, nothing I say will be of any use. It could be a collection of random words for all the effect it will have. Oh, well, there goes another wasted column. Is it any wonder nobody reads it?

IN TROUS THIS MONTH...

120 CHEAT MASTER

Man on a mission, Mark Hill, is here to help you on your merry little cheating way.

121 DEAR KEITH

Every good cheat's best friend, Keith Pullin, answers all your gaming woes.

122 EARTH 2150

Martin Korda shows you the best way to build, bomb, collect, repair and assault your way through *Earth 2150's* Eurasian Dynasty campaign.

126 VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE

With its sprawling levels, ghastly ghouls and dark, dark alleyways, you'll need all the help Andrew Wright can offer in your search for redemption.

132 DEAR WANDY

Need to find a solution to a niggling technical pain? Our resident techie Wandy is here to help.

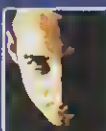
13D WATCHDOG

If you're having troubles dealing with a pesky PC company and can't get any answers, then let the consumers' champion Adam Phillips guide you through your legal rights...

YOUR HOSTS



Adam Phillips



Keith Pullin



Martin Korda

CHEAT MASTER

Who said cheating is for losers? Grab yourself a handful of these and go swindle your games

TRICKSTER Mark Hill

ON THE CD



More cheats, tips and solutions on the cover CD this month. Find out what's in store by looking at the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser.

NEED HELP?

If your problems persist, you can solve them if you...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/Cheat Master, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Boissier Street, London W1P 7JH

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with Dear Keith or Cheat Master in the subject line.

METAL FATIGUE

Psygnosis

Press 'Y' before typing in the codes:

Lava	Unlimited MetaJoules
Robots	Three combots
Panzer	20 tanks
Missile	20 missile cars
Time warp	Hover trucks work faster

WARLORDS BATTLECRY

Mattel Interactive

Type in the word 'codes' while you're playing before adding any of these:

IAMATANK	God mode
IAMASEER	Reveal map
IAMALDSER	Lose scenario
IAMAWINNER	Win scenario
IAMANARCHMAGE	All spells

GUNSHIP!

Hasbro Interactive

This is one frustrating chopper sim, so this cheat will come in handy. It you immortalise the pilots you create make a copy of the ROSTER.FIL file

before heading off to certain death, when you've hit the ground in a lovely wreck of flames and twisted metal you can replace the file with your back-up and get your pilot back. Make a copy of the file every time you complete a mission successfully. Easy, innit?

FLYING HEROES

Take 2 Interactive

Type any of these meaningless words while you're playing to make flying these particular heroes a tad easier and the game slightly less dull:

ANAMLLUF	Full mana
TSDDBERIF	Get disorientated
DUDLCHTAED	Get death cloud
ELBISIVNI	Get invisible
ERIFLLAF	Get FallFire
HSALF	Get flash
HTLAEHLLUF	Full health
KAOLC	Get cloak
LLABERIF	Get fireball
LLABECI	Get iceball
LERRABSAG	Get gas barrel
NIARDICA	Get acid rain
NODDEGAMRA	Get armageddon
OMMALLUF	Full ammo
RATSLATEM	Get metal star
RETROPELET	Get teleporter
SENIMEX	Get xemines
SENIMGA	Get agmines

EMPIRE OF THE ANTS

Microids

To enable cheats, start the game with the command line parameter of '/11' (eg 'C:\Ants\Ants.exe /11'). Press 'F11' to bring up the cheat dialog during the game and type one of the cheats below:

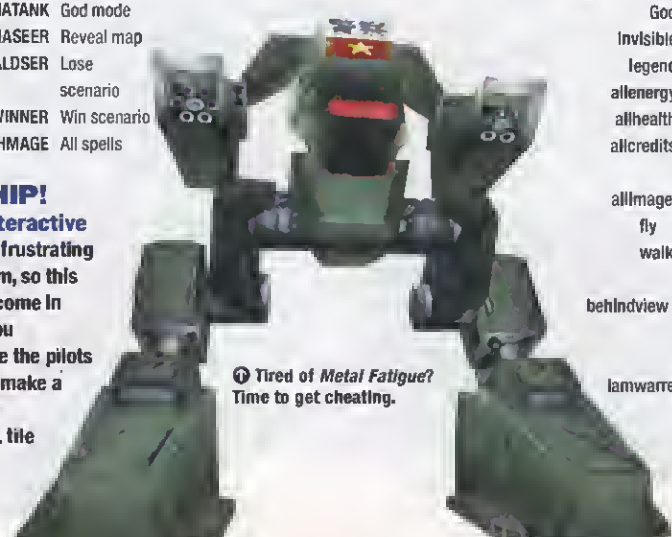
Showmap	Reveal map
Oisco	Turns anthill into disco party
Marche	Freeze ants
Winlevel	Win the level
Loselevel	Lose the level
Wannafood	Get food

DEUS EX

Eidos Interactive

If you can't wait for next month's walkthrough you could do a lot worse than try these out. The route to enabling the cheats is complex, so read carefully. Open the user.ini file in your *Deus Ex* folder, find an open key binding (eg, t=) and add 'talk' (eg, t=talk). Do this for all instances of the key. Now during gameplay, press T, always remove 'Say', and type 'set DeusEx.JCDentonMale bCheatsEnabled True' without the quotes in the console. Now you may type any of the codes listed below:

God	God mode
Invisible	Invisibility
legend	Secret menu
allenergy	Full energy
allhealth	Full health
allcredits	10000 credits
allimages	All images
fly	Fly mode
walk	Fly mode off
behindview	1/0 Third-person view on/off
iamwarren	Turn on EMP field



Tired of Metal Fatigue? Time to get cheating.

allskillpoints	Gives all skill points
allweapons	Gives all weapons
allammo	Refill ammo
allaugs	All basic augmentations
tantalus	Kill current target
opensesame	Unlock targeted door
summon X	Summon item X (see list below)
spawnmass X #	Spawn # of item X

The list of objects you can summon:

Lockpick	Basketball
MultiTool	AcousticSensor
AmmoDartPoison	AmmoDartFlare
AmmoNapalm	AmmoPlasma
Ammo3006	AmmoRockets
AmmoRocketWP	Ammo20mm
AmmoSabot	WeaponPistol
WeaponRifle	WeaponShuriken
AugBallistic	AugCloak
AugDataLink	AugEMP
AugEnviro	AugIFF
AugShield	AugStealth
AugTarget	Terrorist
JCDentonMale	PaulDenton
Greasel	Gray
TiffanySavage	NicoletteDuClare
JoeGreene	WaltonSimons
JoJoFine	AlexJacobson
JaimeReyes	BobPage
RepairBot	MedicalBot
HazMatSuit	Sodacan
Candybar	Liquor40oz



Make jumps like this one less of a risk with our nifty *Motocross Madness 2* cheat.

SoyFood	VialAmbrosia	WeaponStealthPistol	WeaponCrowbar
Rebreather	AdaptiveArmor	WeaponAssaultShotgun	WeaponHideAGun
Binoculars	BallisticArmor	WeaponPlasmaRifle	WeaponPepperGun
LiquorBottle	Credits	WeaponProd	WeaponLAW
WineBottle	Cigarettes	WeaponFlameThrower	WeaponMiniCrossbow
MedKit	VialCrack	WeaponGasGrenade	WeaponSword
Flare	FireExtinguisher	WeaponLAM	WeaponBaton
Ammo10mmAmmoDart		Weaponmodaccuracy	WeaponNanoSword
Weaponmodscope		Weaponmodclip	WeaponEMPGrenade
WeaponSawedOffShotgun		Weaponmodlaser	WeaponNanoVirusGrenade
Weaponmodsilencer		Weaponmodrange	Weapongeppun
WeaponCombatKnife		Weaponmodrecoil	Weaponmodreload

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MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2

Microsoft

Type 'big heads' in the main menu for some stupid fun. To get back on your bike quickly after a fall press TAB. [E]

DEAR KEITH

Let the soothing gaming guidance of Keith Pullin ease your pain

A CLASSIC

Q I'm really trying to get into *Half-Life: Team Fortress Classic*, but I'm finding it very difficult to impress people and stay in a squad. What, in your opinion, is the best character to play?

Darren Jones, Edinburgh

A A recent patch has made the Heavy Weapons Guy much easier to use. The lower ping rate means he can now completely annihilate oncoming enemies in seconds. He can also walk a bit faster than before, so he's definitely a good unit to go for. Also, the Medic is surprisingly effective, especially when you get him out and about infecting people. Getting used to either of those two units should earn you a few new friends.

TURNING JAPANESE

Q What a top game! *Shogun* has to be one of the best RTS games ever! Anyway, I was wondering if you could help me try and take over Japan with the Mori clan. They always seem to start in an area that has really bad farming ground that plays havoc on my yearly income. I always have a poor harvest and have absolutely

no idea how to change it. I would appreciate your help.

Bryan Barnes, Scunthorpe

A Playing as the Mori will never yield a good harvest at first. You need to build other structures to bring in an income. Concentrate on silver mines and docks. Once you have a decent income, spread southeast into the territories there. This should give you some decent agricultural land. From there you should have enough continuous income to conquer Japan.

YOU DEVIL

Q Is there any way to stop dying in *Diablo II*?

Phil O'Neill, Newcastle

A There isn't a way to actually stop dying, but there is a way to minimise its inconvenient effects – like losing all your items. All you need to do is quit the game to start again, and then when your character appears, instantly save and quit again. Restart that character and you should find your corpse appear in front of you complete with items. You still lose your gold, but hey, it's better than nothing,

AFTER DARK

Q I bought *Dark Reign 2* yesterday, but I'm having some serious problems with it. My units keep slowing in battle and then start going the wrong way. What's wrong with them? Is there a way to make them all attack at once?

Tina Pleat, Wrexham

A The slowdown could be due to the fact that you've got a low-spec machine. Your units are probably not attacking properly because you have not switched them to Terminator mode. As for getting them to all attack at once? Try reducing the number of units fighting at any one time; this lessens the chances of units tripping over each other trying to get into the fray.

DALE DALLIANCE

Q I hate it when monsters get it in their heads to relentlessly chase me on *Icwind Dale*. Some of them never give up and end up chasing me across half the world! How do I make them lose interest in that particular character? He's not a very high level character and has nothing of interest, so why are they after him?

Red Cotton, Windsor

A When a monster selects one of your characters as a target, it stays with that character no matter what. The best way to shake any persistent monsters is to move that character through a doorway and shut the door behind them. That way the rest of your party can deal with the monster without taking any hits.

SIMPLE

Q I've got *The Sims* and was hoping you could help me with a dilemma. Basically, I don't know whether to build an extra floor on my house or go for a swimming pool. I really want somewhere for the rest of my family to live, but it costs a bomb just to get the bloody stairs built! At least with a pool the appeal of your house goes up almost instantly and it increases your popularity. Where should I put my money?

Martin Dowry, Walsall

A Life's full of tricky problems, huh? Definitely go for the pool first. Only the richest and most popular Sims have pools so you want to be up there with them. Then save for a staircase.



As well as being great in combat situations, helicopters also double up as quick and effective scouting units.

EARTH 2150

WALKTHROUGH

Caught up in a bloody future war, with the world about to be consumed by the sun, *Martin Korda* thought he'd pass the time by writing a walkthrough. Selfless to the last

★ REVIEWED PCZ #90 SCORE 86%

Although this is the walkthrough for just one of *Earth 2150*'s three campaigns (the Eurasian Dynasfy), there should be more than enough here to teach you the principals of winning while playing any of the three factions.

ARCTIC

Go to the middle of the map and build your base. Build several tanks and set off to the base southeast of you. After disposing of the inadequate enemy forces positioned in the area, head for the edge of the peninsula, where you'll find an artectact. If you have

any badly damaged units, then return to your base and fix them. After they are repaired, it's time to head north and take out the UCS base that you find there. If you hit the base's power sources first, you should find that defeating the enemy troops is made a whole lot easier.

HIMALAYA

Build a base with a Missile Control Center. Scout round the map until you uncover the enemy base and then launch a missile strike against the power plants and the Transport Base. Now send in some helicopters to disable any remaining enemy base defences

before sending in your ground troops to finish off the job.

ARCTIC 2

Get yourself into the middle of the map and start collecting resources. After you collect enough resources, build a tunnel to fulfil your mission goals. This is one of the game's simpler missions.

KAMCHATKA

With the Lunar Corporation encroaching on your territory, you must defend your Research Center in the southeast of the map. Move your vehicles straight from the start of the mission to

avoid too many enemies. When you get to your base, start building the Research Centers. Fortify your base to the north with adequate defences to hold off any enemy attacks. Now start building an assault force with a balance of heavy, light and long-range attack vehicles. Go through the tunnels and take out anyone you encounter. Ensure your laser tank survives.

LEVIATHAN

Take your laser vehicle northwest of your base and take out the UCS forces nearby. Now defend yourself against the Lunar Corporation attacks, making sure

you build plenty of air defences. First, fortify your base to the north, and as you repel the attackers, build up an assault force. Once the enemy attack is over, move southeast with the attack force and take out the enemy base there.

ALASKA

As near to the start of the mission as possible, attack the enemy base to the north. Take out any hostiles by first destroying the base's power supply. Once all enemy units are destroyed, leave the remaining buildings as they are. Collect as many resources as you can from the area.



Whichever side you play as, it's essential that you build plenty of base defences.



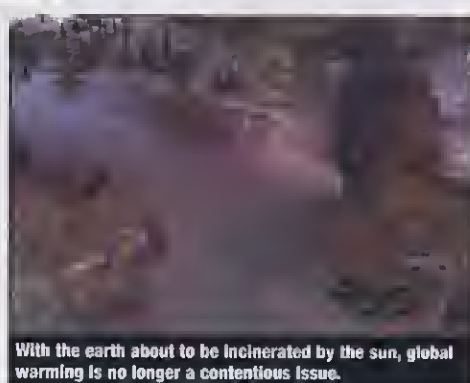
If you come across one of these, destroy it immediately.



This is no time for a fireworks display.



Take a good look, it won't be there much longer.



With the earth about to be incinerated by the sun, global warming is no longer a contentious issue.

JAPAN

Take your forces south, where you'll find an enemy base. Making sure your assault force has several anti-aircraft vehicles, take the base. Other bases can be found to the west and southeast. However, land vehicles will be useless here, so build plenty of units with hover or sea capabilities. Once again, hit their power supplies from afar and then move in for the kill with your helicopters and then your ground troops.

CANADA

Don't waste your time or resources on building too many defences. Instead, concentrate on getting together a sizeable assault force. Use this to first dispose of the enemy units to

the southwest. With a large number of heavy units as escorts (and a repair vehicle if you're not too confident you'll make it), send your Gruz into the tunnels and knock down the wall to get to the Computer Center. The files can be found to the southeast.

GREAT LAKES

It's important to make sure you have some helicopters at your disposal in this mission. Head south with them to uncover some resources. Although not essential, the mission will be a great deal easier if you start a new base near these resources. If you do build a base here, make sure that your western side is particularly well defended. Build some heavy, light and long-range attack vehicles and head west.

Take out the base here. It may take you several attempts to achieve this. The best way to do it is to create a diversion and sneak some units in to destroy the base's power sources. Once these are down, you'll be able to use your helicopters, which will make victory far easier. Mine the nearby resource field, then build up your forces again to take out the northeast base. Finally, go down the tunnels to retrieve the files.

NEW YORK

Investigate the tunnels with the NEO. Caution and speed are required to avoid the enemy defenders. You must retrieve items from the northwest, south and west bases. Patience is a key factor with this mission.

AMAZON

Using helicopters as scouts, find the resource fields on the map. Then build up an assault force. Build bridges to reach the resources and the Lunar Corporation base, which you'll find to the northeast. Fortify your base and resource fields with the units you've built, and hold out till you've collected enough resources to complete the mission.

AREA 51

Fortify your landing zone. Now build an assault force making sure you include some repair units. Head down the tunnels and try to scout ahead and lure any enemies towards you (in order to give you an edge) making sure that they don't get

to the tunnel entrance. Search around the alien ship to find the power cells.

INDONESIA

Fortify your base (paying particular attention to the north side) and build an assault force. Also, make sure that your base is protected by plenty of anti-aircraft defences. Northwest of you is a Lunar Corporation base. If you can take out its power supply it will be yours. Once you've taken it, extract the resources from the nearby field. There's a UCS base to the south. If you're clever, you can take out the power sources with your helicopters before sending in your ground troops from the north to take over the base. When you have taken it over, mine its resources.



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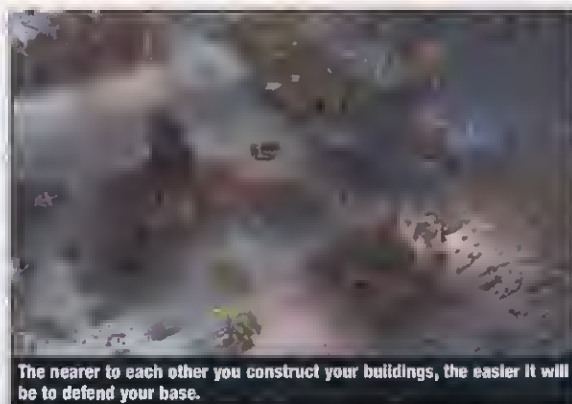


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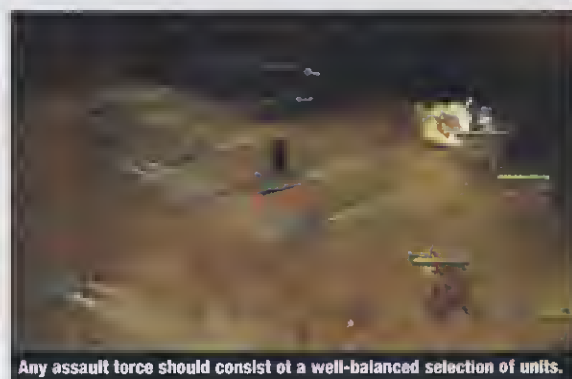
THE GATEWAY TO GAMES



Always scout out the enemy's strength before launching a land or air attack.



The nearer to each other you construct your buildings, the easier it will be to defend your base.



Any assault force should consist of a well-balanced selection of units.



INDIA

Head northwest and build a base near the resource field. There's another field to the northwest. Once you get to the UCS base, try to lure the enemy to you, and pick them off. It takes a while, but it will save you losing loads of units. Extract the resources from the field. If you can, whittle down the two enemy bases to the north. Also, make sure that you have plenty of units and defensive turrets protecting your base, as you'll soon be attacked by a massive force.

PANAMA

Take out enemy defences near the bridges and destroy power sources along the river with your helicopters. Build a new bridge, cross the river and head north. Lure the enemies out to avoid heavy losses. Take out the UCS base nearby, then the one to the

southeast. Then take out the Lunar Corporation base to the south.

MADAGASCAR

Head west, sticking close to the water. When you get to the field, build a landing zone and call down some units, making sure that a few of them are Gruz units. Send them east underground to get to the files. All you need to do now is upload the data.

AUSTRALIA

Make sure you protect your Caspian at all costs. Go north at the start and collect the artefacts. Lead the way with your Caspian, which you should equip with shields. Never stop moving your units, until you reach your goal.

RED ROCK

Take out the enemy in the middle of the map and mine the resources from

the resource field to the northeast. The three important things to remember are to take out the enemy's power supplies, stop them tunnelling into your base by collapsing their tunnel entrances and, most importantly of all, take out their Plasma Control Center as soon as possible. Once you've defeated this base, gather the resources from the southeast field.

MOZAMBIQUE

Start moving straight away to reach your base safely. You'll need to repair a bridge along the way. Build up an assault force,

making sure you have plenty of helicopters. There's a UCS base to the west. Again, it is imperative you take out the Plasma Control Center before launching an all-out attack. Use the helicopters to knock out the base's power and then move in your ground troops.

NEW ZEALAND

Use units with hover and sea capabilities to get to, and take out, the base to the south. You'll need to have several goes at it and wear it down slowly. There are plenty of resources near the landing field to keep you going. If this isn't enough though, go west and east of the resource fields where you'll find some more.

the UCS base and take it out. Then go north with all of your troops and destroy the Lunar Corporation base that you find.

ALGERIA

Fortify your base and build up an assault force. Continue building units, while sending a sizeable force south. Take out the UCS base you find there. By the time you've done this, you should have a massive force. You'll need it to take out the powerful base in the east of the map. Hold your forces back while peppering the eastern base's power supply with missiles. Then move in with your ground troops.

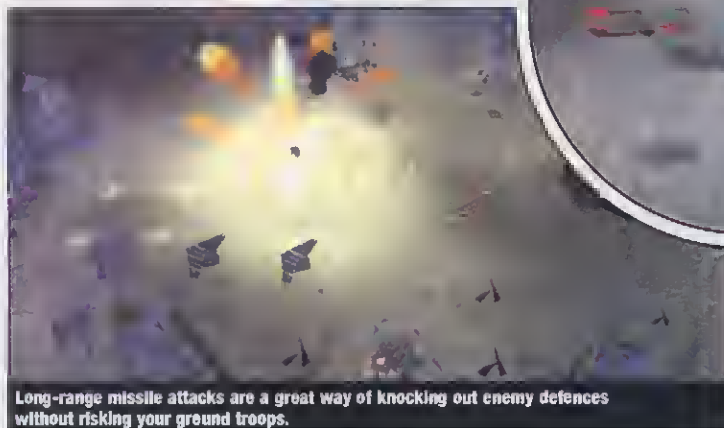
CONGO

Fortify your base, starting with the south side. Building long-range attack weapons will enable you to weaken the enemy and its base from afar without you having any

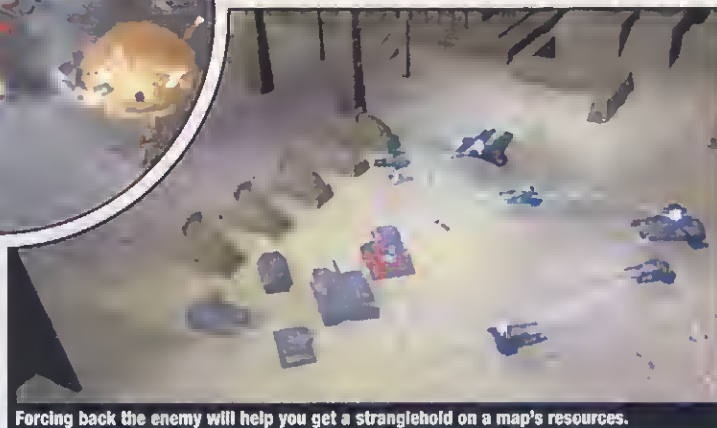
Gaining air superiority is often a key factor in any mission.

EGYPT

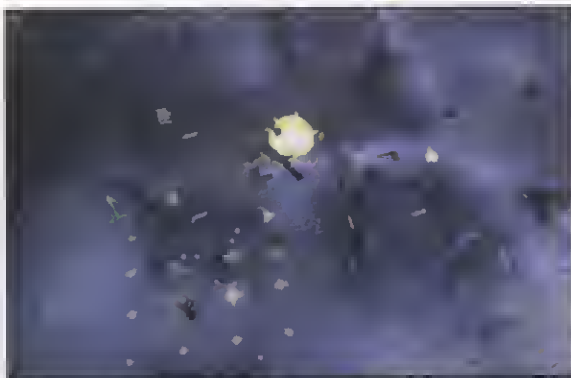
Concentrate on building up sea and air units. Also, check out the tunnels. Cross the river to get to



Long-range missile attacks are a great way of knocking out enemy defences without risking your ground troops.



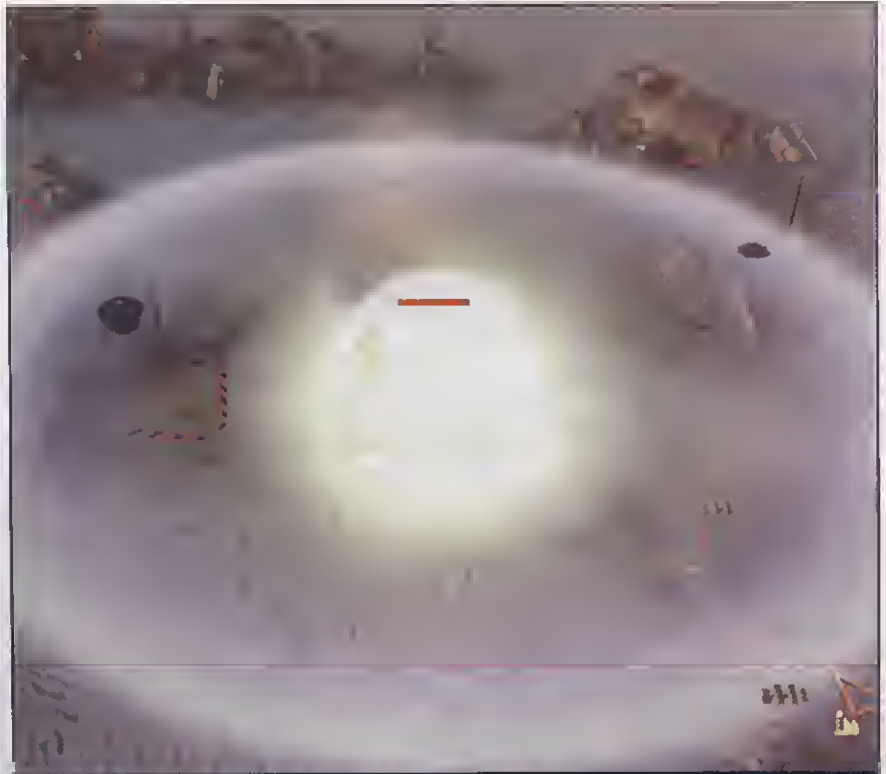
Forcing back the enemy will help you get a stranglehold on a map's resources.



Wiping out the enemy is important. But don't forget about Project Exodus.



The boys don't fancy it today Sarge – can we go sledging instead?



Knock out the enemy's power supply and they'll be easier to defeat.

casualties. After the initial enemy attack has been repelled, build up your forces and take them towards the middle of the map. Soften the base up with long-range missile attacks before sending in ground forces. The easiest way to get to the resources is through tunnels.

COLUMBIA

Follow the guide. Make sure you make your way quickly to your base, but not at the expense of being discovered. Once you're there, fortify it. Set up a Missile Center and use the missiles to take out the UCS base's power supplies. It's also a good idea to take out the Plasma Control Center, otherwise you'll incur heavy casualties.

LESOTHO

Head east and build a base. As soon as you can, get yourself a

Missile Control Center, and stock up on as many nuclear missiles as you can afford. Send out a scout helicopter to reconnoitre the area until you uncover the enemy stronghold. Blitz the enemy with these missiles and, if need be, build a few units and destroy what little resistance remains after your bombardment.

ANDES

Build a base with a Missile Center. Then build a squad of helicopters to scout out and disable the enemy power supplies. With the power down, use helicopters to pick off ground forces while building a land-based assault force. Once the enemy is weakened, send in your ground units to finish them off.

AMAZON 2

To the west there is a Lunar Corporation base. To the north is a UCS base. Fortify your base to ward off attacks and construct

a Missile Center. Scout out the Lunar Corporation base and use a few missiles to knock out its Weather Control building. After this, wear down the bases from afar and then send in the ground troops. Use the middle resource field to top up your supplies if need be.



Volvo's attempt at an image change went a bit too far.

ANDES 2

Start collecting resources from the nearby field as soon as the mission starts. If you build up a sizeable force, you can set yourself up to take over the field in the centre of the map as well. This will speed up reaching your goal. You will need to defend your base staunchly in this mission, but make sure that you also build

a Missile Center. Find the Lunar Corporation and UCS bases. Use your missiles to disable their power supplies. Also target the enemy's vehicle production buildings. By doing this, you will be able to take control of, and hold onto, the middle resource field far more easily.

PERU

Head southeast into the middle of the map and extract the resources from the fields you find there. Scout north and west. Now build a Missile Center and take out its power and production buildings. Build a sizeable assault force and move in on each one individually. Once you gain air superiority, your task will be simpler. Remember that you need to accumulate enough resources for Project Exodus – this should be your main concern in this mission. [X]

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Learn how to best tackle some of *Vampire's* more revolting monsters.

VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE — REDEMPTION WALKTHROUGH

You know to avoid garlic, sunlight and sharp pointy stakes around the heart area, but here's **Andrew Wright** on the complete guide to becoming a vampire

★ REVIEWED PCZ #92 SCORE 90%

It might be a fairly straightforward game, but *Vampire's* sprawling levels present their own challenging problems. In fact, you'll need to be a hardened gamer to complete it without some of these tips.

PRAGUE

After the initial cut-scenes, you come round in bed. Kill the szlachta that are attacking Sister Anezka and you'll collapse again.

When you wake again, tell Anezka you'll go straight to the mines. Exit the convent and go to the cathedral to receive the Archbishop's blessing. Then find the blacksmith's shop and buy a torch and anything else you can afford. The gypsy store to the north has healing potions for sale.

Silver Mine

Make your way to the east gate, converse with the guards and go down the mine. You'll face

szlachta and rats on the first level. Investigate everything and pick up all the bottles, potions and holy water vials.

On the second level you come to a water obstacle. Look around for a lever on the wooden frame to your right. As you cross, a war ghoull attacks. Watch out for its powerful slashing attacks — keep moving in and out, striking quickly before it can hit you. The third level brings your first vampire, Azhra. Keep out of her clutches and throw holy water at her, then finish her off with your sword. Search the throne room carefully.

Patrol in Prague

Return to the cathedral and then visit Anezka. The Archbishop will punish you by making you patrol

the streets at night. Tell him you'll obey but will protect the streets in front of the convent as well.

Outside, despatch the two szlachta and return to the convent to face some ghouls. Try to pick them off one at a time by running and turning to fight or backing down the nearby alley to reduce the number that can attack you at once. A ranged weapon, such as a bow, will come in handy because if you hit the inventory button to change weapons, the game will pause. Inside the convent you'll have to save Anezka, only to face a rather contrived plot device in which you're turned into a vampire.

Petrin Hill Monastery

Drink from Ecaterina to finish the transformation, but when

she demands that you submit, agree only to follow her lead for the present. Afterwards, you'll be introduced to your first coterie member, Wilhem, and told to locate a fragment of the book of Nod.

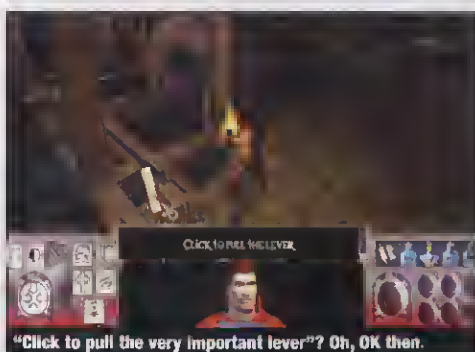
Take Wilhem to the blacksmith and gypsy and equip him with weapons and potions. Then go through the north gate to the bridge where Wilhem will teach you some basic vampire moves. Cross the bridge and turn left to the monastery. The first level features harmless monks on which you can feed later. Other enemies include Cappadocian vampires and walking dead. On the second level are locked doors, each opened by a switch in a nearby room.



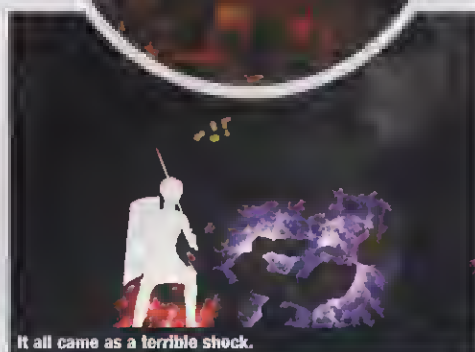
Just don't get blood stains on that lovely rug.



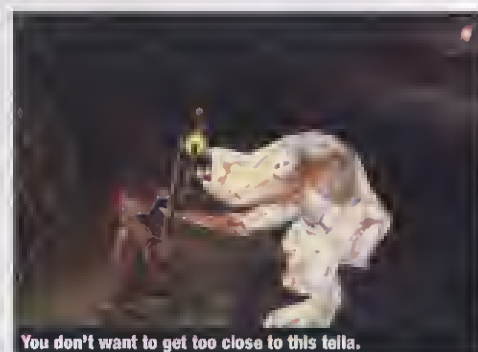
Good old Christof wants to see Anezka in Vienna.



"Click to pull the very important lever"? Oh, OK then.



It all came as a terrible shock.



You don't want to get too close to this tela.

On the third level, you'll come to a locked door to Mercurio's room. Carry on to find Garinol's desk and the bone key to open it. Read Garinol's journal and take the Skull of the Lamia. Gather as many goodies as you can and return to Mercurio's door. Inside, offer to let him live if he gives up the fragment. If Wilhem attacks him from another direction – preferably with feral claws – you'll soon defeat him. Now you can leave the monastery with the fragment.

North Quarter

Apparently there's a golem terrorising the North Quarter. Guess who's been chosen to stop it? On your way, stop by the University to return the Nod fragment to Ecaterina. Back in the body-filled streets, find

Mendel in an archway to hear why the golem is berserk.

The golem is tough, so have lots of healing on hand. Ranged weapons are useful, as are Greek fire, holy water and edged (lethal) weapons. Take the shem to Mendel, who'll tell you to take it to Garinol. You then need to backtrack all the way to the monastery where Garinol and a whole group of Cappadocians are waiting for you. After handing the shem over, his kindred Serena joins you. Return to your haven.

Next, see Ecaterina whereupon Prince Brandl will give you another quest to recover an ancient relic from the Cathedral crypts. Access is via the cemetery but you'll need a bottle of vitae from Ecaterina before Josef the guard will let you in.

Josef's tunnels

Give Josef the vitae and he will open the gates. The Nosferatu vampires and rats are easy to kill but they can turn invisible so heighten senses scrolls work well. The hard part is the labyrinth on the third level. Run through the doors in this order – red face, castle, triple face, waves, ankhs. Next come the crypts which in turn lead you to the boss of this level, Vaclav. Like other spirits, he's immune to normal weapons so you'll need to use vampire disciplines to defeat him. Have Wilhem use feral claws while Serena and Christof throw holy water or use damage-dealing disciplines.

Return the relic to the Prince for yet another quest to the Tremere chantry. Ask if you can liberate the slaves. You'll

make Brandl angry, but you won't lose humanity.

Tremere Chantry

The chantry is in Golden Lane. As you enter, it appears to be a shop, but further in you will find a vast network of tunnels. The enemies are all Tremere vampires, but they come in multiple varieties. On the third level there are more Tremere and a gargoyle. The gargoyle looks worse than it is, so take out the Tremere first. After the gargoyle, you'll get the fourth and strongest member of your coterie, Erik.

Kill the slave-trader, Ardan, and then go back to Ecaterina. Christof wants to see Anezka in Vienna but she's against it. During the long argument, think carefully about your responses, always put Anezka first and don't

be bullied. That way you'll maintain humanity.

VIENNA

You start in the grounds of a church near your new haven. Shops, smiths and various potion sellers are all nearby – stock yourself up as much as you can.

Go to the Eastern Strasse and the Green Frog Inn. Inside, three vampires will give you an invitation to visit Orsi's mansion. Go there and speak to Orsi – he wants you to assassinate someone. Head to Inner Stradt, enter a house and make your way to the rooftops. There's a door to Stephansdom near the big clock.

Stephansdom

Once inside, fight your way outside. Avoid the rays of sunlight too or you'll take hefty damage. To

you'll be back

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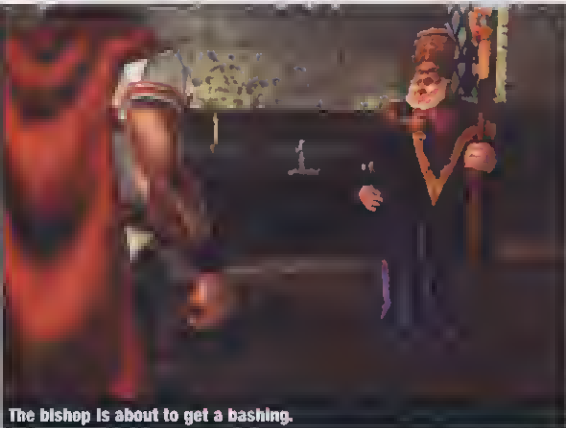
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Taking out these giant spiders shouldn't present a huge problem.



The bishop is about to get a bashing.



Lucretia turns into this giant snake, the poor love.



Careful with that axe, Eugene.

get to level two, pull the middle, left and right levers. In the mirrored room, you'll see two buttons in the mirror — press the second and last to open the exit.

When you find Luther, he asks you to bind him. Agree and go upstairs to the rafters. Put a character on each switch and hit them as simultaneously as possible to turn him into toast. After that, Orsi turns up and takes you prisoner.

Teutonic Knight's Base

You're now prisoner in the Teutonic knight's base, thanks to the treacherous Orsi. Serena will get you out using her powers. Conserve your disciplines until you get up to the second or third levels and look after your party well. The knights aren't invincible but feeding off them is difficult. Later you'll find weaker Tremere to feed on.

On the top level there are lots of goodies to loot but lots more resistance to overcome. To defeat the captains, kill the lesser knights first then concentrate your weapons on the leader. You escape to the Haus de Hexe, a Tremere stronghold.

Haus de Hexe

Inside, a giant seal blocks your way. Locate three sigils behind each of the doors. Complete each level and place the sigils in the correct positions to gain access to the rest of the dungeon. The toughest enemies here are the Tremere lords — concentrate your party and attack them quickly before they deal out too much destruction.

Before you replace the third sigil,

strip Erik of all his gear because he'll be turned into a gargoyle in Etrius's sanctum, leaving little choice but to kill them both. Get rid of Erik first, then charge Etrius. Don't bunch up or he'll use fire spells. Spread out and he won't. Have one character simultaneously attack the elemental with feral claws and celerity.

Vysehrad Castle

Back in Prague you find that the vampires and humans are officially at war. Go to the south gate and approach the castle through the gap in the wall. Head down through the levels full of monsters ranging from szlachta, rats and revenants to war ghouls and wolves. Your objective is a set of double doors on the bottom level.

Before opening them, make sure none of your coterie is low on health because the boss here is a vozhd, a massive creature that deals out incredible damage. Use a 'walk the abyss' scroll if you can, to strengthen Serena and Wilhem for the fight. Make sure you put some good gear in your vault too as you'll have to rely on it when you get to London.

Vozhd can bite your head off in one attack, so don't go for close-up combat. Hit and run is one way but the best tactic for all three characters is to use ranged

disciplines or weapons. Have all three blast away at him, then enter the door behind to finally find Anezka...

LONDON

Society Of Leopold

You awaken 800 years later in modern London. There's no rest for the wicked... Kit yourself out as best you can and head out of the room. Lab workers can deal out damage spells and while some have tazer guns, others have stakes or throw holy water. Take out the stake-wielders first and the water-chuckers next. Soldiers either have guns, stakes or flamethrowers. Bullets can't harm you but the stakers and flamers are a major menace.

When you reach the first level, you'll see Father Leo Allatius. Poor man, your sword despatches him quickly. Go back to the first room and find the door you couldn't open before — it leads on to the streets of London.

Temple Of Set

Go to Club Tenebrae and join with Pink. He'll show you where you can buy and sell armour and guns. Buy an extra set of everything. Go to the docks and climb a flight of stairs. Past the flaming barrels are steps leading to the brothel and the Temple of Set. Lily will join you, so give her the spare gear.

Follow the hallway to the room full of paintings. There's a switch on the corner of the wall that opens the way to the temple. This is a tough dungeon with huge numbers



This creature deals out vast amounts of damage.

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of enemies and you need to conserve ammo carefully. Setites carry guns, stakes, incinerators and machetes, but if you've got armour the stakes aren't such a threat. On level three you'll meet Lucretia. Speak to her first. Try to get her to free Lily and you'll earn extra humanity, but eventually you have to fight her.

Tower Of London

To get Lucretia's heart, leave the temple and then head for the Tower of London. Level one is full of giant ghoulish spiders (destroy the eggs to stop more hatching) which are only dangerous in numbers. The other levels have wraiths too. Remember they're spirits so weapons don't hurt 'em.

On level four, grab the heart and run out to the tough werewolf. Hit him repeatedly with fire-based attacks. If you have to melee, practise retreating damaged characters, healing them and then returning them to the fray. If you can stay alive, you'll eventually kill the thing.

Return To The Temple

Go back to the Temple of Set and see Lucretia. She turns into a giant snake, another monster that is vulnerable to fire-based attacks. Give her everything you can until she stops to talk. If you want a good ending to the story, threaten to destroy her heart and end her wickedness. Once she's dead, Christof gains the useful discipline of serpents. Leave the dungeon, head to the docks and take a ship to New York.

NEW YORK

Sewers

In New York, an agent tells you about the Giovanni's warehouse.

On the street you see three vampires bullying another. Help Samuel out and he'll join you.

Around the corner is a fire escape leading to an apartment — your haven. Inside, a hacker called Oev/Null will tell you how to access the warehouse. Find the gun shop and stock up on weapons and ammo, then locate the manhole cover near the apartment and enter the sewers.

Here you will be fighting Nosferatu plus a few rats and spiders. Use the skiff on level three to cross the water, but be ready to fight the alligators when you land. They deal out lots of damage so have plenty of healing items ready. If you can, fight them from a distance.

The Nosferatu underprince is on the bottom level. He attacks whatever you say and summons rats to help. Keep your attacks, with normal weapons, focused on him as he has an unlimited supply of rats. Afterwards, click on the FBI box and exit.

Giovanni Warehouse

Back home, get the access codes and head for the warehouse. The first level is swarming with Giovanni vampires, some of whom have nasty weapons, but at least there is plenty of blood around to steal or drink. Wraiths appear on level two. The final encounter is with Giovanni himself but all you need to do is take everything off Pink, approach the man himself and watch what happens...

Orsi's Factory

Take the taxi uptown and enter the Barclay Hotel. Search the penthouse. Lily will recognise the palette. Leave the building, turn

right along the wall to a door. Inside the Barclay storage area is Alexandra who explains the plot. Kill the two ventrues that attack you, take her painting and go to Orsi's factory. The guards will let you in. Start at the bottom and hack your way up through the vampires, szlachta and war ghouls until you meet Orsi again.

After a short confrontation, Christof shoves Orsi through the window into the molten iron. Leave the room, walk downstairs and threaten Orsi's daughters.

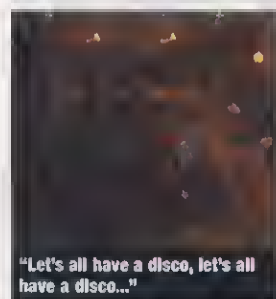
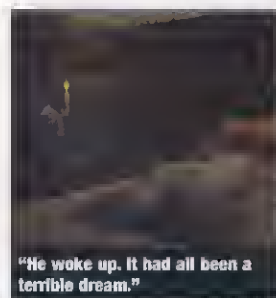
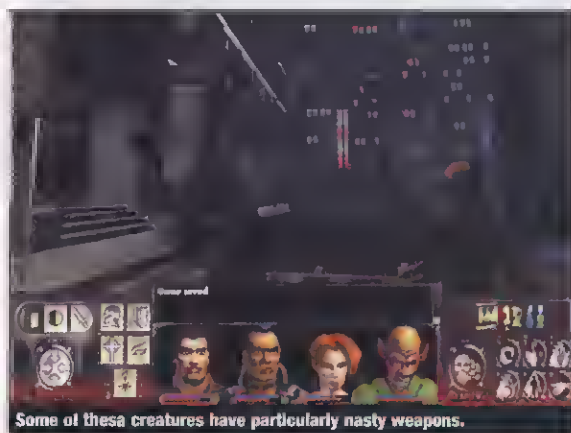
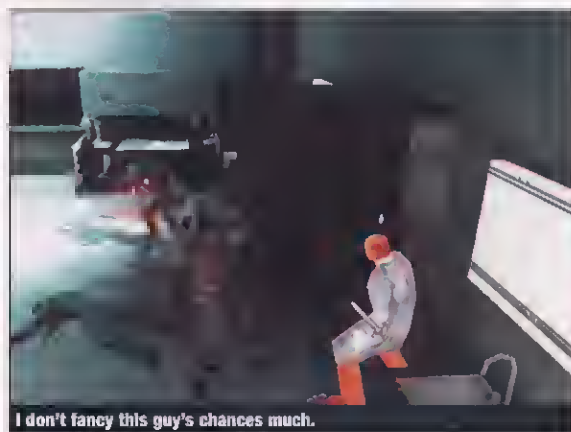
Cathedral Of Flesh

For the final battle choose a single weapon for each character, fill up every spare slot with blood and ammo and make sure everyone is 100 per cent.

You meet some pretty fearful stuff here, from war ghouls up to demon hounds and vozhd. Use doorways to reduce their effective numbers, ranged weapons and damage disciplines. Have Christof steal vitae whenever he can. The only real danger is the room in which you face two vozhd at once.

The big boss is Vukodlak. After some dialogue — choices depend on your humanity — you'll have to fight him. Stay at range as he does lots of melee damage and use blood healing to keep all your characters over 50 per cent. After a while he'll drop you below ground. Talk to the snake heads, then move to the next room. Choose to trust Libussa.

Vukodlak now reappears as a giant dragon. Use the same combat strategy as before and give him everything you've got. Once he gets damaged to a certain point, the game ends and the final cut-scenes kick in... **PC2**



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Please note: while we can assure you that we read every techle query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone, as you're unlikely to reach someone who can help. Thanks.

“Like Gary Pickups, I am cursed with a motherboard with built-in graphics – for the life of me, I can find no way to disable the built-in graphics”

PAUL BRISTO, HAVING SOME NASTY VIDEO PROBLEMS

NO GO VIDEO

Q With reference to Gary Pickups's letter in PCZ #89, I am also cursed with a motherboard with built-in graphics (SiS 530/5595). I say cursed because for the life of me I can find no way to disable the built-in graphics – curiously, there's an option in the BIOS to disable the built-in audio.

After doing some research on the Internet, I found there are many people who have this problem and no one seems to know if it's even possible to put in a new card. Some people have only found this out once they have spent their money and bought a new card they can't get to work.

Do you know if there is any way to get around this? Surely no one would sell a computer that you can't upgrade?

Can you help me by putting this debate to an end? The motherboard company has proved very unhelpful by not returning my emails.

Paul Bristo

A Unfortunately, there's no law saying that users must be able to upgrade their PCs. And so it's quite possible that your particular motherboard won't ever talk to an external

REUSE NOT FADE AWAY

Q I just need to ask a couple of questions before I spend a load of money. At the moment I have a rather poor PC: it's a Cyrix MII-333MHz on an ATX board with 64Mb DIMM RAM, Techworks Power3D2 12Mb PCI, a Trident Microsystems AGP card and a Maxtor IDE HDD. What I thought I would do is replace the motherboard with a gigabyte 5AA 100MHz ATX with an AMD K6-2 550MHz processor sitting on top. Then add in 128Mb PC100 RAM and a Voodoo5 5500 64Mb AGP card. But I was wondering if all this will work? Will my existing power supply work? Will the heat sink and fan from my Cyrix processor be OK for the AMD? Also, is the Creative 4 point speaker and sub-system any good, or does it just look that way?

Simon

A As long as your current case has a standard ATX layout and its power connector is the ATX 2 x 10-pin arrangement, there's no reason you can't carry out your planned upgrade.

However, we'd steer clear of reusing the CPU fan. The faster CPU will require more cooling than the old one, and as a new fan can be bought for the price of a few beers, it could prove to be a false economy in the long term. Overheating your CPU will cause an amazing amount of peculiar errors before it finally fries in its own juices.

Not quite sure what to say about the sound system because we haven't heard of it. To be honest, very few – it indeed any – PC speaker systems really impress, although with the popularity of PC-based DVD and home theatre, we're starting to see some decent kit on the way (see csw.creative.com). Having said that, a lot of expensive sound setups can usually be beaten by a regular midi system from any high street electrical retailer. We use an old Aiwa NSX-V900 for

pumping out phat bass and it knocks the socks off anything you can buy from a computer store.

WHERE'S THE REGISTRY?

Q I recently read the 30 Tips For Windows in the July Issue. And for many of the tips you needed to be able to use Program Register. As a not very experienced Windows user – games are what I use the computer for – I am not sure where it is. If you could please tell me the directory of the program I would be very grateful.

I also wanted to increase my download speed as I download a lot of accessories for *The Sims*, which in my case I think is the second greatest game ever made! I don't care what a lot of people say about it, it is excellent! Anyway, I can't find my Network Neighborhood anywhere. Could you please help me to find it?

Liam Heaney

A The program you are looking for is the Windows Registry Editor, or plain REEDIT for short. It can be found residing in your Windows folder (normally C:\WINDOWS or C:\WinNT). If you press the Start button, then click on Run and type regedit in the box, it'll fire up. A word of warning, though: the Windows registry is a vast database of options, settings and preferences that together form the DNA of your desktop and determine how your PC works, looks and feels. Fiddling with it can easily knock your entire system off its feet.

As for your *Sims* downloads, Internet downloads will only go as fast as the slowest point in the link, so if the site is busy, or your ISP is under pressure, things are bound to slow down to a crawl. If you must download from sites in the USA, try doing it at times when they're all still in bed (they are between five and nine hours behind us, so before midday is usually good). Alternatively, use

a download manager such as **Go!Zilla** (available from www.gozilla.com), which will find the fastest alternative download site for you.

Network Neighborhood is usually found on the desktop. If you don't have a network set up, you won't get the icon.

WRITING ON THE WALL

Q I've been playing multiplayer *Half-Life* and also the brilliant mod *Counter-Strike* for nearly a year now, and although I've mastered the various techniques of multiplayer gaming, I still don't how to personalise a tag. By 'tag' I mean the logo you can spray everywhere during Net games. I have seen others with their own unique logos and I was wondering if there is a program on the Net or a place that can help me out.

Shank

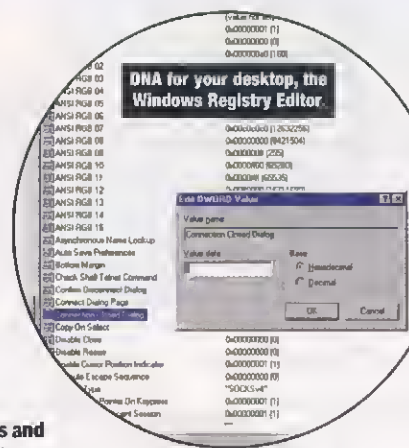
A The tags can be found in the *Half-Life* Logos directory. To make your own, simply draw a pattern, or cut your face out of a photo in something like *Photoshop*, *GoreDRAW* or *Paint Shop Pro*, and then resize it to 64 pixels by 64 pixels square. Save it as a 256 level grey-scale image in the logos directory – it'll then show up in the list so you can choose it as your own personal picture.

WHINES AT COPPERMINE

Q I bought a PIII 700MHz Coppermine CPU with a daughterboard adapter for the socket 370 from a PII 233MHz. Now my PC randomly freezes up, and the only way of restarting is hitting the reset button. I'm thinking that I might need a BIOS update? I have all the jumper settings correctly configured. My motherboard is a Digimate PII, PIII and Celeron compatible, and uses the BX chipset. Also – and I know this is going to sound stupid – for about ten minutes after installing my processor I connected up the



Motherboard with mediocre video. OK, it want that kind of thing. Not so great if you don't, of course.



fan. In other words, my CPU was running without cooling for ten minutes. Do you think it will in any way be damaged?

Rhys

A We think it's almost certain that you need a BIOS update. Intel's Coppermine seems to be causing a lot of weird problems with the earlier machines. For example, we've had experience of a PC that would randomly drop off the local network after a couple of hours use. After much head-scratching, it turns out that the Award BIOS was having major arguments with the new Coppermine and the network card was refusing to talk to the rest of the system. Strange. So go get your download from the manufacturer's site at www.digimite.com.

We'll not deliver a stern lecture about cooling the latest generation of fast CPUs, as you've already confessed to being stupid. You may, or may not, have been lucky. It's too early to tell. Normally, a CPU will start locking up and crashing as it overheats before it causes any permanent damage - so cross your fingers, and go give the BIOS update a try.

PLUCKY THIRTEEN

Q I am a 13-year-old who loves PC games. At the moment I am considering an upgrade, but as my parents think that the PC we have at the moment is good enough, I am forced to do it myself. We currently have a PII 233MHz, 64Mb RAM PC with an original Voodoo 3dfx card. As I said, I need an upgrade. Please can you answer these few simple questions: 1) I want to buy an AMD 533MHz processor from Jungle.com for £50. Will my old PII 233MHz machine be able to handle this? 2) If so, will this setup last me for a while, or should I save up even more for, say, a 600MHz machine? 3) Should I upgrade my graphics card as I have an old 4Mb Voodoo? 4) Considering my price range, what card should I go for? 5) Why are you so damn lucky to have your 600MHz machines with ADSL?

James (aka Funky Noodles)

A Unfortunately, the AMD K6 is a Super Socket 7 processor and the Intel Pentium II is Slot 1 (now known officially as the '242-contact slot connector'). This means that, unless you 'persuade' it into place with a club hammer, it simply won't fit.

So you will require a new motherboard, which is going to depend on what style of case you have. Hopefully it's a generic desktop or tower case, so any

new ATX motherboard will fit. If you have a Compaq or Packard Bell or something similar, you may well be in trouble - many volume manufacturers design their own motherboards, and it that's the case for you, you'll have to get yourself a new case.

The original Voodoo card is getting a bit long in tooth now, so an upgrade would certainly give things a boost. There are many truly fab and truly cheap cards based on the obsolete NVIDIA TNT chipset, or you could go for the Voodoo3 range - now a lot cheaper thanks to the arrival of more exciting models.

Just for the record, the current WandyBox™ is a lowly 550MHz, and doesn't yet have AOSL.

WANDY TALKS S**T?

Q With reference to your letter in PCZ #91 called *Bargain Brawn Part One*, you advised a gigabyte GA-5AA or GA-5AX depending on which case it was going into. Having owned a PC for some three years I felt it was time once again to take the plunge and upgrade. After reading said article, and seeing that a 450MHz system could be owned for as little as £150 (with graphics card), I visited the boys at Action.com to check on the prices. Sure enough, the motherboard was priced at £57.34 + VAT and the processor at £35.99 + VAT, making a total of £109.66 inclusive. Great, I thought - only to look at the specs for the motherboard and find that it only supported up to a K6-2 300MHz processor. Is this right, I asked myself, as I have been a reader of your magazine for some time and have rarely had cause to doubt your expert judgement. As we all know, though, the world of computers is an expensive one to the untrained shopper, and would it be possible to expand your ever-growing magazine to cover such questions as upgrades - graphics cards and the like are so very important to the avid games player.

Jon Weeks

A You will often see motherboards listed with a top CPU speed well below their real abilities; we're assuming this was to do with old sales blurb lodged somewhere in the information chain. We can personally vouch for the GA-5AX board. It will run at 100MHz, and it will work with the 4.5x multiplier required for the K6-450. It memory serves, it goes right up to 6x. See for yourself at www.gigabyte.com.tw

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W
War Games Delton 1
War Gods
Warcraft 1 & 2
Waygasm
Wayhammer
Warzone 2100
Wing Commander IV
Wipeout
Wipeout XL
Wolfenstein 3D
World Cup '98
Worms Series
WWF Wrestlemania
X
X-Com Series
X Games Pro Boarder
X-Wing
X-Files: The Game
X-Men Child. of Atom



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Customer Service: 08700 885 656

WATCHDOG

The software industry can sometimes be a closed shop when it comes to punters and their complaints. Let **PC ZONE** ramraid their premises for you and snatch some answers...

MAN ON A MISSION Adam Phillips

LIVING IN A WORLD O' HURT?

If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line. Please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you've got a techie problem, then write to Dear Wandy (page 132)

WRITE TO Watchdog, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7KJ

EMAIL Email us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'

"I feel we are being taken for a ride and we're paying for the privilege. Suffering humiliation is one thing, paying for it is fundamentally unacceptable"

ONE OF MANY DISSATISFIED CUSTOMERS MADE TO WAIT BY NTL

WATCHDOG SPECIAL: NTL. TECHNOLOGY. MAIMED?

NTL HELL #1

Q NTL's advertising slogan is, "I can't understand paying for something you don't get!" I noticed in your last issue that you advised readers to go with ntlworld for free Internet access. I feel I must warn people about this service. Several weeks ago my parents decided to change to NTL and forked out for a second line to be put into my room. Then NTL flatly refused to provide us with a CD for Internet access, or even a date when we would receive one!

The reason given for this was that if it gave a CD to everyone who has paid for one, the service would be so slow that no-one could use it. I find it disgusting that, this being the case, NTL is still advertising "free unlimited Internet access". My dad has demanded that it pays for access via another ISP until its service is working, which seems fair, but to no avail. Today we received a letter from NTL saying that it hopes all the CDs will be posted by the end of August, which means I have no Internet access for all of the summer holidays. Help!

Tom Vajzovic

NTL HELL #2

Q I pleaded with my parents for ages to get me online and they finally decided to sign up with NTL as they had a new "free Internet all hours" offer – excellent, as I own *Unreal Tournament* and want unmetered access.

On the CD, it said it was charged at 1p a minute at all times but I assumed it wouldn't charge as the advert plainly stated, "all NTL Internet customers have unmetered access" (or words to that effect) and the free offer date (April 17) had already gone.

My mum phoned NTL and was told that we were being charged at the moment, but not to worry because the free software should be with us in a few weeks. We waited a few weeks and my mum phoned them up again. NTL told her that we should wait 28 days – I was beginning to get a bit annoyed about this but we waited. It's now 28 days later and I still don't have a CD! I believe it is illegal to make such false advertisements as it definitely said it was free for all customers. I hope that NTL will listen

to you and do something about this because I've waited more than two months for a CD. I'll make it clear now that I don't accept the excuse that there are too many CDs to be sent out. A big company like NTL should have no problem making a few hundred thousand CDs – ADL seems to manage it! Even my local NTL shop in Hemel Hempstead doesn't stock the CDs at all.

William Gant

NTL HELL #3

Q I registered for NTL's free Internet service way back in February. At the time, I was a BT customer and happy with its service, but the promise of free 24-hour Internet usage was too good an offer to miss.

The service would go live on April 17. Two weeks prior to this, I decided to join the NTL camp wholeheartedly, and had two phone lines fitted via NTL. April 17 came and went but still there was no disc. NTL did send me a lovely email explaining that it had no idea of the inevitable tidal wave of demand and in order to maintain a high standard of service, there would be a slight delay! To cut to the chase, it's now July. I have just received my disc arrival date which is, wait for it... August 31. That's four-and-a-bit months overdue. And approximately £120 of my money! Multiply that by the thousands who have joined up and methinks it won't be in too much of a hurry to get these discs out.

I know that I speak for thousands of people living in my area, judging by the letters in the local paper. I feel we are being taken for a ride and we're paying for the privilege. Please help us out – suffering humiliation is one thing, paying for it is fundamentally unacceptable.

PC ZONE reader

A Ho-hum. *Quelle surprise*. Here we go again with another ISP who seemingly isn't delivering on its promo fluff because of "unexpected demand". Watchdog approached NTL to find out why there seems to be such a monumental delay to its service. "We understand the frustrations of people who are currently waiting for their ntlworld disc," offered a spokesperson for the company, "and regret the fact that [your readers] have felt the need to write to [you] about this issue. We knew the service would be popular but acknowledge that we have underestimated the extent to which many hundreds of thousands of people in the UK

would want to take advantage of it from the moment it launched."

NTL goes on to say that more than 650,000 people have registered with the service over the first weeks. While it claims that it would like to send a disc to every customer immediately, "we are determined to maintain a quality service and are therefore controlling the rate at which our customers come online to ntlworld through a queuing system," the spokesperson continued.

NTL says that it would like it pointed out that it has been making it clear in all of its communications that there would be a waiting list for the service in order to cope with demand, and that it has been sending emails regularly to people in the queue. "In a further effort to deliver ntlworld discs to customers who have already registered for the service, and to prevent building up even more demand, we have stopped advertising the service in the television, radio and print media," offered NTL.

For those who registered with the company during April and May, NTL is "confident" that it'll be able to supply ntlworld discs by the end of August at the very latest. Customers who have registered during June and July are being advised that they will have to wait "for some while".

"NTL is the only major telecoms provider to offer a free and unlimited access Internet service in the UK," it says. "Not only is it a free service, but ntlworld also maintains a quality service level – in fact, it's been voted top ISP by many independent experts. We therefore hope that customers understand the reasons why we have controlled the flow of discs but we must be sure that we can deliver an excellent service to them and to all of our customers. Rest assured we are committed to delivering ntlworld to as many people as soon as we possibly can. We will continue to communicate regularly with people in the queue by both email and post to keep them updated."

This is all fair enough – after all, quality service etc is important. But for a company that purports through its advertising to be in touch with the Internet scene, to use the excuse that its service has been more popular than they expected is, quite frankly, piss poor.

Another ISP surprised by the demand for free Internet access.



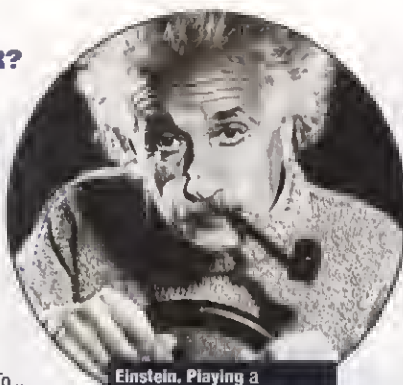
WOT WINNER?

Q I'm writing to this section of the magazine because I feel I have been cheated by none other than... you – *PC ZONE*. Don't get me wrong, I love your magazine and buy it as soon as it hits the shelves but in the March 2000 issue you ran a competition in the How To... Become A PC Games Expert feature. The prize up for grabs was an AMD 600MHz PC. Usually competitions seem to be a bit take to me because of the usual 'hard' questions that mags give you, but this one seemed challenging and would occupy my time, while possibly earning me a PC in the process.

After spending about two days working the questions out by asking friends and searching sites, I finally sent off all of my answers, keeping my fingers crossed. After weeks of waiting in hope, I realised that I must have lost and some other lucky sod must have won.

I have bought all issues up until now looking for the answers that I tripped up on and hoping to find out who had won but to my dismay they weren't there. Now, I don't usually get worked up about things such as competitions but I worked really hard to try and win the PC. I was hoping you could tell me what exactly happened to that "Win A PC!" competition!

Daniel Danso



Einstein. Playing a computer game. Yesterday.

A Blimey. Well pointed out – we neglected to print the details of the winner. There was one, honest. His name is Philip Whitehouse from Darlaston in the West Midlands, who now has a very tasty AMD 600MHz PC sitting on his desktop. The Jammy git. As for the answers, there ain't space to print them here – look out for them in the next issue!

DISAPPEARING DISCOUNT

Q My problem began with the latest copy of *PC ZONE* which housed an advert for PC World. I was looking forward to the release date of *Shogun: Total War* as I knew by looking at the PC World advert that the game was priced at £29.99. This meant that I wouldn't have to wait for mail order due to the advertised price being within £1.

I happily made a trip to my local PC World to find the price was £34.99 – excuse me?

I checked with the cashier, showing her the advertisement in the magazine. She disappeared with both the game and mag and, on her return, she told me that the discount was only available if you purchased a Voodoo3 2000 card and *Shogun* together.

She then said that the branch didn't know of any advertising in your magazine. I didn't get anywhere arguing so I paid the price. Why should I or anyone else take any notice of the PC World adverts if they don't comply to their pricing?

Michael Whiting

A Well bloody said, Michael! So was PC World misteading our readers or was there some confusion at the store you shopped at? The latter according to PC World: "Thank you for bringing to our attention the problem experienced by your reader Michael Whiting," said a spokesperson for the company. "We are sorry to hear about the confusion Mr Whiting experienced and, as a gesture of goodwill, we will be sending him a refund of £5. Readers of *PC ZONE* wishing to purchase *Shogun: Total War* at the advertised price of £29.99 can take a current copy of the advert into PC World and show it to a member of staff. We apologise for any inconvenience caused."

So there we have it. If anyone else experiences problems, please let us know. ☹



The PC ZONE posse storming the PC World offices. How dare they overcharge our readers.

READ THIS PLEASE!

If you are writing into complain about a product, whether it be a ropy piece of software or a shoddy PC, please supply us with your full name, address and contact number. With PCs

especially, make sure that you also include all purchasing details such as reference and invoice numbers. It means that we can resolve your problems much quicker.

PC ZONE

COMING NEXT ISSUE

GIANTS

EXCLUSIVE

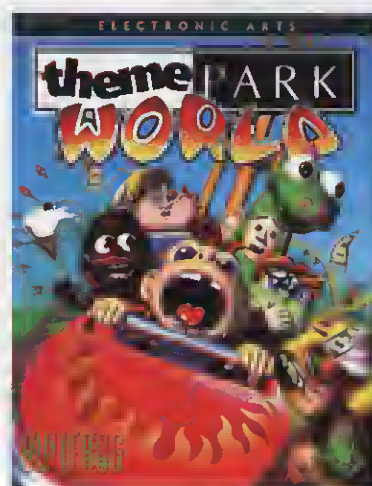


And, if the Gods are with us, we'll not only have an exclusive review of this well-proportioned game, but an exclusive playable demo as well. Next month's *PC ZONE* is also going to be the only place you're going to find a review of *Homeworld Cataclysm*, the standalone add-on to last year's RTS smash, along with *Sudden Strike* (finally), *Age Of Empires 2 Expansion*, *Heavy Metal FAKK 2* and all the latest mods and online games.

ON SALE

THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

£19.99



excessive choice of games

Virgin

megastores

DANGEROUSLY ENTERTAINING

WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

We confronted a few unsuspecting victims and grilled them about their hard drive content

★ **VENUE** Electronics Boutique – Oxford Street, London **YOUR HOST** Martin Korda



MALCOLM SMITH Retired

What's on your hard drive?

"Flight Unlimited 3, Eastern and Western Front, Thief I and II, Battle Of Britain, Need For Speed: Porsche Challenge and Monaco Grand Prix."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"B17: Flying Fortress 2, expansions for Flight Unlimited 3 and any good Grand Prix games, as I'm a big fan of the sport."

Who's going to win this year's Formula 1 title?

"Probably Hakkinen again."



LAWRENCE WILLIS Just Graduated

What's on your hard drive?

"Champ Manager 99/00."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"I can't wait for the new Champ Manager to come out."

Did the last one take over your life?

"Absolutely."

So what's the longest Champ Manager session you've ever had then?

"I don't think I'll answer that. It would only incriminate me."



VANDERLEI SILVER Student

What's on your hard drive?

"C&C: Tiberian Sun."

With all these 30 RTS games around, do you think Red Alert 2 will be able to compete?

"I don't think it will have any problems competing, as Westwood keeps improving the series. I think Tiberian Sun is a really great game."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"Dracula: Resurrection." I'm saying nothing.



KENRIK GLASGOW Removal Porter

What's on your hard drive?

"Champ Manager 2000 and a couple of Star Wars games."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"I haven't got a clue yet. Possibly another Star Wars game."

What did you think of The Phantom Menace?

"Rubbish I'm afraid. It was nowhere near as good as the others, and it was generally a bit bland. The only good character was Darth Maul, but there's not enough of him."



AARON SMITH Student

What's on your hard drive?

"C&C: Tiberian Sun, Kingpin and Driver."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"Star Trek: Voyager and Driver 2."

Which is the best Star Trek series?

"Voyager, because it's set in a different part of space."

Who's your favourite character?

"Tuvok because of his changing attitude towards Neelix. He's also got absolutely no sense of humour at all."



GARY FISHER Theatre Technical Manager

What's on your hard drive?

"Half-Life, EverQuest, Ground Control and Falcon 4."

How would you compare Ground Control to other RTS games?

"I don't generally play many RTS games, but this one appealed to me because it hasn't got any resource management. You can just concentrate on the tactical side of things."

Is this the way forward?

"I think so. I just like to get in there and have a quick battle."



JANUS SCHOFHEIDE Student

What's on your hard drive?

"Diablo II and Half-Life."

Have you played Counter-Strike?

"Yes it's great, I've run up a massive phone bill playing it."

What are you looking forward to playing in the future?

"Action games, squad-based games and RPGs."

Do you think Diablo II is a great improvement over the first one?

"It's much better. The graphics have been improved and the gameplay is better."



ROBERT BUCKNALL Insurance assessor

What's on your hard drive?

"Fighting Steel and some of the Jane's flight sims."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"SWAT 3."

What is it that you like about military games?

"I use to be in the army, I made it as far as lieutenant."

What would be your idea of a great war sim?

"A naval battle sim with dreadnoughts and battleships."



JOSE TUEIRIGA Customer Services Assistant

What's on your hard drive?

"Counter-Strike, Airport Inc and a load of Star Trek games."

What are you looking forward to playing?

"Klingon Academy and any good strategy games."

What makes Counter-Strike so appealing?

"The realism of the teamwork."

Is realism the way forward for games?

"There's no point in making games if they're not realistic."



NICK SUMMERS Model

What's on your hard drive?

"All of LucasArts' Star Wars games and C&C: Tiberian Sun. I think it's the best game ever."

Steady on mate. Do you love all the Star Wars games as well?

"Nah, there have been some real stinkers. Star Wars Supremacy was dreadful."

What did you think of the acting in Tiberian Sun?

"I thought it was excellent, but the gameplay is what did it for me."

Hold on, are we talking about the same game here?

PCZONE TOP 100

Welcome to the definitive buyers' guide for all discerning PC gamers. The games that grace these pages represent the best titles across all genres. Check here for regular updates

This is the new *PC ZONE* Top 100. Within it you will find the best games you can currently buy for your PC. All the games here deserve a place in our illustrious Top 100 as we go to print, but that could

all change next month when newer titles come in and older games receive new ratings to reflect where they stand in the great scheme of things. Shrewd buyers will always check here first before parting with their money.

BENCHMARK GAME

Benchmark titles are the games that you simply must have if you are a fan of the genre. They are considered by the *PC ZONE* team to be absolute classics and should be bought without hesitation. All new games are compared to their genre's benchmark title when they are reviewed. Bear this in mind before writing into Mailbox

complaining that the latest 3D shooter didn't automatically get 90 per cent: check here first to see what it's up against! Additionally, all games in that genre will receive a new rating every time a new benchmark title comes along.

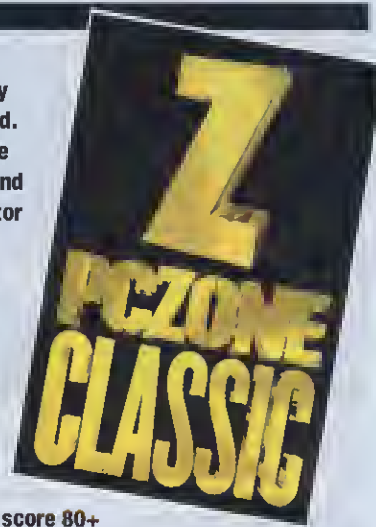
NEW ENTRY

In the wonderful world of PC gaming, new titles come in every month, some of which are better than the games currently in the Top 100. When this happens, they will gain their rightful place in the Top 100 and lesser titles will drop out to make room for them.

BUDGET If a game in the Top 100 is available on budget, it will be tagged accordingly. Games that are lower in price than other titles in their genre do not necessarily receive a new score to reflect this. The latest score the game received will still apply; It is up to you to decide whether or not the game is worth buying at its new price point.

Under the *ZONE* scoring system, new games will have to be pretty spectacular to receive this award. They will have to take their genre to unprecedented new heights and represent a major step forward for PC gaming. There are now very few titles that can justifiably be described as *PC ZONE* Classics. This trend will continue across all genres. Generally speaking, all *ZONE* Classics are must-have titles (the benchmark title being the definitive game of the genre), but that does not mean you should discount games that score 80+

per cent. These games receive the *PC ZONE* Award For Excellence and are essential buys if you are a fan of the genre the game fits into. Classics, on the other hand, are games we think will appeal to everyone and will bring new fans to that particular genre. There will not be many of them, but when we say a game is a Classic, we mean it!



Buy on-line www.jakarta.co.uk

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS

STRATEGY

HALF-LIFE

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #71 • 95%

✦ Taking the first-person shooter as its starting point, *Half-Life* redefines the genre with an engrossing story, cracking atmosphere and some of the best AI ever coded. *Half-Life* is probably still the best game you can install on your PC, and it's now available with the superb *Opposing Force* add-on in the 'Generations' pack.

PUBLISHER Sierra
• 0118 9209 100

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

PCZ #81 • 90%

✦ Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake III's* multiplayer, with a combination of well-designed maps and diverse gameplay. The single-player mode might be too short, but it's still going to be more than a challenge for most.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

QUAKE III ARENA

PCZ #87 • 89%

✦ The biggest brand name in PC gaming is back. The sheer speed, intensity and unrelenting action of *Quake III* make it an essential purchase for all shoot 'em up fans, but sadly the lack of variety prevents it from topping *Unreal Tournament*.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

PCZ #88 • 82%

✦ The original *Thief* set new standards in FPS titles with its move away from mindless action towards stealth and its excellent use of light and sound. This sequel delivers more of the same quality gameplay, minus the out-of-place zombie levels.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

PCZ #77 • 81%

✦ It might not be the best FPS you can buy, but it's definitely the scariest. *Aliens Vs Predator* is also the only game that offers three distinct ways of playing through the game, so if you're looking for a solid single-player blast, this provides excellent value for money.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

PCZ #89 • 80%

✦ More like an arcade explosion of unmitigated violence than a FPS in the *Half-Life* mould, *SoF* is a great deal of fun. It's also very sick. If you can stomach amputations and decapitations, then we can guarantee you pure, mindless entertainment.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

KISS: PSYCHO CIRCUS

PCZ #93 • 78%

NEWENTRY The team of *Daikatana*-detectors have actually come up with a much better game – using the UthTech engine and basing the levels on songs by glam-rockers Kiss. This is not cutting-edge gaming, but you will find it is a solid, fun shooter.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME

PCZ #77 • 77%

✦ This controversial title should be talked about for its excellent gameplay and graphics rather than its violence and swearing. Because, quite frankly, that side of the game was crap. We still stand by the game though – it's classic adult entertainment.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

SNOGO: MOBILE
ARMOUR DIVISION

PCZ #71 • 76%

✦ Half *Quake* and half *MechWarrior*, this game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. Boasting great graphics and storyline, its only faults are iffy AI and the fact that it's a bit too easy for hardcore *Quake* fans.

PUBLISHER Microdots • 00 33 1 4601 5401

SIN

PCZ #70 • 74%

✦ Releasing *Sin* at the same time as the vastly superior *Half-Life* was commercial suicide. But you can now bag this title for less than a tenner, which gives you the perfect excuse to find out just how good it actually is. No Classic, but an excellent game in its own right.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #89 • 93%

✦ *Shogun* is the first strategy game that has blown us away in a long time. Command enormous armies in epic and bloody battles, send ninjas to assassinate enemy generals and conquer your way through the map of feudal Japan. The 3D engine works beautifully and the in-game options never get in the way of instant playability.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442

AGE OF EMPIRES II

PCZ #84 • 89%

✦ It might not be radically different from the original, but sometimes evolution is just as good as revolution. In *Age of Empires II*, the gameplay has been honed to perfection with balanced units and strong single and multiplayer campaigns. Forget the hype of *Tiberian Sun* and opt for this classic RTS.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

GROUND CONTROL

PCZ #92 • 87%

✦ RTSs are increasingly dropping resource management in order to concentrate on strategy. *Ground Control* pulls this off with flair, gorgeous looks and a brilliant camera. If you're after a 3D strategy title but don't fancy samurais, this is the answer.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

CIVILIZATION II: TEST OF TIME

PCZ #68 • 86%

✦ A title that lives up to its name, *Civilization II* is probably the oldest game in the Top 100 and it will probably still be around in years to come. Turn-based and in 2D, it offers unlimited replayability and depth. One of the few games that everyone should own.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234

EARTH 2150

PCZ #90 • 84%

✦ A fantastic 3D engine and great detail team up with sheer playability to make this one of the best RTSs around. Second only to *Shogun* this year, *Earth 2150* is a more traditional strategy title, but it takes the genre even further than it has been before.

PUBLISHER Mattel Interactive • 0144 424 6333

HOMEWORLD

PCZ #82 • 82%

✦ *Homeworld* delivers the dream of millions of PC strategists the world over: a fully three-dimensional, strategic experience. The vast expanse of space is the battleground, the hundreds of ships at your command and the weapon, and the only limit is your imagination.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

IMPERIUM GALACTICA II

PCZ #85 • 81%

✦ Space expansion and empire building have never looked so good. This title boasts the depth of a turn-based strategy game with the immediate action of real-time, plus a great interface and tutorial, which means you'll know your way around in no time.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

TOTAL ANNIHILATION

PCZ #56 • 80%

✦ With a ridiculous number of units and unrivalled pace, the original *TA* still stands head and shoulders above more recent efforts. No story to speak of and weak single-player action, but still, for a tenner, no one should be without a copy.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

TNEUCRACY

PCZ #88 • 79%

✦ Blending the best of *Age of Empires* and *Civilization*, *Theocracy's* mix of real-time and turn-based gameplay allows you to guide the Aztecs through history and attempt to right the wrongs of the Hispanic conquerors. In short, an unexpected gem.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

C&C: TIBERIAN SUN

PCZ #81 • 78%

✦ Perhaps not as stunning as one might have hoped after a three-year wait, *Tiberian Sun* is nevertheless a truly great game. Pushing the *Command & Conquer* genre to its limits, it offers PC strategists immense depth, detail and variety.

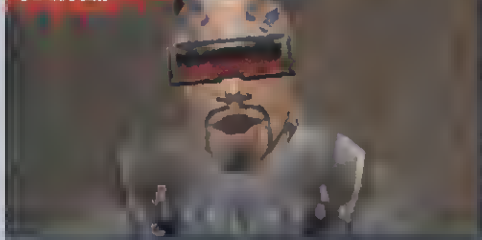
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

ACTION/ADVENTURES

DEUS EX

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #93 • 94%

NEWENTRY Warren Spector takes the finer elements of *Half-Life*, *System Shock 2* and *Thief* and weaves an RPG of complex beauty that revolutionises computer games. A fascinating sci-fi plot and complete player freedom are just some of the reasons why *Deus Ex* is such a landmark wonder.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
• 020 8636 3000

GRIM FANDANGO

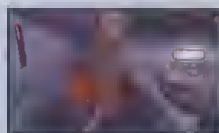
BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #71 • 88%

❖ If you've followed the successes of LucasArts from the early days of *Monkey Island*, *Sam & Max* and *Day Of The Tentacle*, this is a must-buy. Sublime graphics and genuine humour ensure it's a classic of its genre. A word of warning: it's bloody hard and it your mind doesn't work laterally you'll be playing it until the day you die.

PUBLISHER LucasArts
• 020 7368 2255

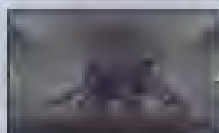


SYSTEM SHOCK 2

PCZ #80 • 91%

❖ Definitely one of the most compelling, original and disturbing games to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* manages to successfully mix the genres of role-playing, action and adventure into one. Play it in the house on your own with the lights off to prove how hard you are.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE - REDEMPTION

PCZ #92 • 90%

❖ This amazing RPG is a treat to play. An epic storyline, tactical combat and great acting and music more than make up for the fact that it's a linear hack 'n' slash game at heart.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000



PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

PCZ #87 • 87%

❖ An incredible game from Black Isle, creators of *Baldur's Gate*. It's a dark, adult, scorcher of an RPG. Moreover, the character development is the best we've seen in any game of its kind and the story is compelling, with well-scripted dialogue.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



BALDUR'S GATE

PCZ #73 • 80%

❖ With every developer going 3D these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. In a nutshell, *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

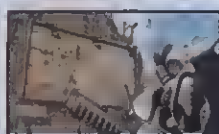


FINAL FANTASY VII

PCZ #66 • 80%

❖ Despite the recent release of *FFVIII*, we still rate this earlier episode in the series above it. The story is better, there are more subgames and the whole thing is more involving, especially if you like Japanese-style cartoony graphics. And it should be out on budget soon.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000

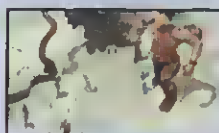


FALLOUT 2

PCZ #71 • 79%

❖ Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you liked the first game, you'll love this — not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper and one of the best RPGs money can buy.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



ICEWIND DALE

PCZ #93 • 75%

NEWENTRY Despite the introduction of larger enemies, *Icewind Dale* is little more than an add-on pack for *Baldur's Gate*. It looks the same and it plays the same, which isn't surprising since it's made by the same people. Very good, but we'll wait for *BG2*.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



DIABLO II

PCZ #93 • 72%

NEWENTRY Blizzard might have repackaged the original *Diablo* and produced a bigger version with the same graphics and gameplay, but its fans aren't complaining. It's already one of the biggest selling games ever.

PUBLISHER Havas Interactive • 0118 920 9100



ODIUM

PCZ #87 • 70%

❖ Imagine an RPG in the style of *Final Fantasy* with battle sequences à la *X-COM* and you'll get a good idea of what *Odium* is like. The story is set in a European city populated by UN soldiers and an amazing variety of monsters. In short, it's curiously compelling.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000



DISCWORLD NOIR

PCZ #79 • 87%

❖ Although the point-and-click adventure genre is dying, *Discworld Noir* is very much alive. It's darker in style than previous *Discworld* games and is all the better for it in our opinion, particularly if you're not a fan of Pratchett's off-the-wall humour. Don't miss it.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791



THE NOMAD SOUL

PCZ #83 • 86%

❖ Distinctly odd, but also refreshingly original, *The Nomad Soul* is a huge, intricate world populated by lap-dancers and (gulp) David Bowie. At turns adventure, beat 'em up and platformer, it's insanely ambitious and almost pulls it off.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

PCZ #84 • 86%

❖ LucasArts moves away from the point-and-click genre and into *Tomb Raider* territory for the latest *Indy* outing. Thankfully, the adventure elements are still in place in this whip-cracking romp.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456 7000

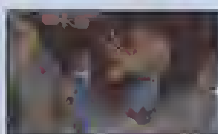


MESSIAH

PCZ #85 • 82%

❖ Shiny's wonderful shooter features a chubby cherub, but also a bunch of whores and some gratuitous swearing. As Bob, under-age agent of God, you must possess people's bodies and, like a good Christian, kill absolutely everything that gets in your way.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

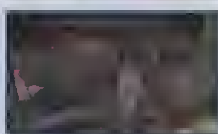


RESIDENT EVIL II

PCZ #75 • 82%

❖ Not quite as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. A modicum of simple puzzles, offset by liberal and gratuitous gore, make for top entertainment.

PUBLISHER Virgin • 020 7368 2255



NOCTURNE

PCZ #84 • 81%

❖ Why would you pay good money to be scared? Because it's damn good fun, that's why, and if you find the average PC game laughable, we dare you to sit through *Nocturne* with your curtains drawn. It's a beautiful exercise in computer-generated fear.

PUBLISHER Take 2 • 01753 722900

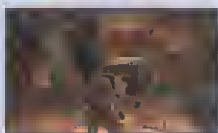


MONKEY ISLAND 8000 PACK

PCZ #74 • 80%

❖ *Monkey Island 1* and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 4567000



TOMO RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

PCZ #83 • 79%

❖ Lara's back in her fourth (and best) adventure so far. More moves, better looks, intricate puzzles and a well-developed plot. It's not going to win over the cynics, but it's still a damn fine game.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 020 8636 3000



SAM & MAX AND DAY OF THE TENTACLE

NOT REVIEWED • 78%

❖ Two of the finest adventure games in the world ever are now available in a single pack for a bargain price. They still match most titles that are released today, so go and buy them. Now.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 4567000

Buy on-line www.jakarta.co.uk

RACING GAMES

MIDTOWN MADNESS



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #79 • 88%

Jump in your car and drive around Chicago participating in races, annoying the police, or just cruising around. Not quite *Grand Theft Auto 3D*, but just as much fun, this is definitely the best all-out arcade racer you can currently buy on PC. And that is exactly why it raced into pole position in our driving supertest ahead of everything else.

PUBLISHER Microsoft
• 0345 002000



BUDGET

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

PCZ #68 • 85%

Sporting an updated *TOCA* engine, *Colin McRae* is still the benchmark in rally simulations. It boasts realistic handling, car customisation and stacks of multiplayer options, which all contribute to keeping it well ahead of its rivals. It's now available as a budget title, which makes it an absolute steal.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



LE MANS 24 HOURS

PCZ #87 • 82%

Although not quite as challenging as the race it's based on, *Le Mans 24 Hours* is a driving game for skillful players who know their brakes from their elbows. You can even get involved in a rewarding career mode culminating in the famous race itself.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199



NEED FOR SPEED PORSCHE 2000

PCZ #90 • 80%

Not as good as hooking up with your mates at the arcade, but still a damn good conversion of a damn fine game. Forget realism and concentrate on flinging your car around the track as fast as you can. Who needs depth when racing is this much fun?

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



RALLY MASTERS

PCZ #89 • 80%

Rally games tend to blend into one another quite seamlessly. After all, the cars look exactly the same and they go round the same tracks. *Rally Masters*, however, offers the all-important feel of a great driving game together with loads of options and some tasty graphics.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 7738 8199



TOCA 2

PCZ #76 • 80%

Predictably, Codemasters has gone and done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrolheads. Graphically, it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it most certainly is.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

PCZ #84 • 80%

Close, but no *McRae*. That was the verdict from the boy Hill on this new racer. It looks fantastic and the on-screen Ordnance Survey map is a nice touch, but it's let down by some poor camera angles and unnecessarily solid obstacles. Ouch.

PUBLISHER Actualise • 01625 855015

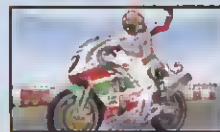


MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2

PCZ #92 • 80%

More crazy two-wheeled antics in a sequel that doesn't drastically improve on the original, apart from the obvious graphical update. It's still great fun and far removed from reality – but you might want to track down the first one in the bargain bin.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



SUPERBIKE 2000

PCZ #8R • 78%

The best motorcycling sim on the PC, this game sports incredible visuals, slick handling and astonishing detail. But it's too easy to fall off unless you use computer-assisted help. However, for pure two-wheeled action, *Motocross Madness* is still the best option.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



BUDGET

MONACO GRAND PRIX

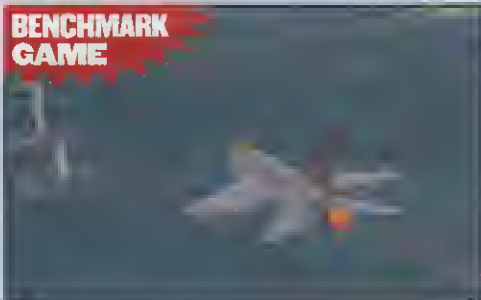
PCZ #69 • 74%

Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. The game looks beautiful, plays even better, and the AI is second to none. However, bear in mind that you need a hefty machine to have it looking its best.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

FLIGHT SIMULATORS

FALCON 4



BENCHMARK GAME

PCZ #72 • 89%

We waited patiently for years for this title to arrive, and the good news is that, for once, we weren't disappointed. *Falcon 4* sports beautiful 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure that leaves the competition standing. If you're going to buy one flight sim, make it this one – we guarantee that you won't be disappointed.

PUBLISHER MicroProse
• 01454 893893



BUDGET

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR

PCZ #68 • 87%

This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece may seem a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you who are looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this title.

PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633



F/A-18E SUPER HORNET

PCZ #83 • 86%

If you like your flight sims to be realistic with a great big capital 'R', look no further. In fact, this game is so life-like that the US navy has adopted it for promotional work and ground-based familiarity training. But make sure you watch out for friendly fire.

PUBLISHER Titus Software • 01926 335 5400

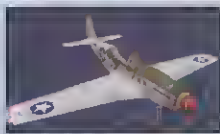


MIC ALLEY

PCZ #80 • 86%

Mic Alley gives hardcore flight simmers' piloting skills a run for their money, but don't let that put you off. If you're willing to put in the work, this title will repay you with a wealth of excellent in-flight graphics and a selection of brilliant mission-planning elements.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337

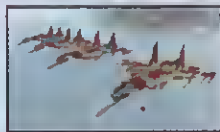


FLIGHT UNLIMITED III

PCZ #82 • 85%

For all those sim aficionados who enjoy the experience of flying for its own sake rather than as a lame excuse for blasting other flying things to bits, this (along with the *Flight Sim* series) is an object of worship and devotion. It certainly deserves high praise.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



FLANKER 2.0

PCZ #85 • 84%

Hardcore pilots with a taste for Yankee blood need look no further. Extremely hard to fly, but very rewarding nevertheless, *Flanker 2.0* recreates the real thing in minute detail. However, be warned: hours of practice are needed before you can go off shooting stuff.

PUBLISHER SSI • 01293 651300



ENEMY ENGAGED: COMANCHE HUKUM

PCZ #89 • 84%

The latest helicopter sim to hit the shelves, it is also the best one to date. In no other game do you feel the excitement of being involved in a real war, largely due to an excellent dynamic campaign mode.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 020 8343 7337



JANE'S USAF

PCZ #88 • 82%

USAF offers playability that allows non-hardcore fliers to have a successful spin. While this means that the standards of realism are nowhere near other titles, it fills the gap for those of us who don't care about such things. This is a great flight sim that anybody can enjoy.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

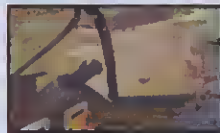


JANE'S F/A-18

PCZ #89 • 82%

Another game based on the US navy's Super Hornet, this is an incredibly detailed jet sim that suffers slightly from being too hard for beginners. Graphically, it's up there with the best and the interface makes you feel as close to the real thing as is possible on a desktop.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



TEAM ALLIGATOR

PCZ #85 • 80%

Helicopter sims are rare but when they do appear on the scene they are usually superb. Although *Team Alligator* doesn't quite surpass the cheaper *Apache Havoc*, it has truly beautiful graphics and feels great to fly. Without doubt the best Russian chopper sim around.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 020 7258 3791

SPORTS

FIFA 2000

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #84 • 86%

★ The FIFA franchise has been rolling on for years and it gets better each time. Although it missed a Classic rating by a whisker, *FIFA 2000* is still the best conversion of the finest sport known to man. You should be able to find it on budget soon. Or you could always tork out the full price for the recent *Euro 2000*, which is essentially the same game.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
• 01753 549442



SUPREME SNOWBOARDING

PCZ #85 • 85%

★ Snowboarding is not a sport you'd expect to captivate a PC audience, but this game gives as exhilarating an experience as you could hope for without breaking a leg. Oh, and all the streetwise attitude you'd expect is here, of course.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 020 8738 8199



PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF 2000

PCZ #92 • 84%

★ Not that different from last year's ground-breaking title, but this 2000 edition has enough subtle tweaks to make it a worthy purchase if you loved its predecessor. The best control system we've seen in what is definitely the best golf game available.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



NOA LIVE 2000

PCZ #85 • 82%

★ As slick as always, but what makes the 2K edition special is the inclusion of teams from the '50s onwards, comedy haircuts et al. Although not quite as immediate as *Inside Drive*, it's a more complete simulation of the sport all round.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



OPEN TENNIS 2000

PCZ #92 • 81%

★ Not since *Super Tennis* on the SNES have we had so much fun hitting a ball back and forth over a net. After some initial reluctance the whole office stopped fragging and started lobbing. Incredibly playable and unsurpassed in multiplayer.

PUBLISHER Cryo • 0121 250 5070



NOA: INSIDE DRIVE

PCZ #82 • 80%

★ While not exactly the most popular sport in this country, *Inside Drive* manages to suck you in with its supreme playability. Its presentation is not quite up to EA standards (but what is?), but when the gameplay is this good, who cares?

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000



VIRTUAL POOL 2

PCZ #58 • 79%

★ Shading *Jimmy White's Cueball 2* as the best game with balls on a table, *VP2* is much better than its predecessor. 3Dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules makes it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

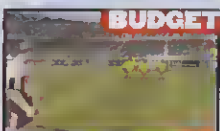


JIMMY WHITE'S CUEBALL 2

PCZ #68 • 78%

★ The finest snooker simulation on the PC. Chalk your cue and take on the PC or your mates, and when you're tired of the balze you can move round and have a go on the fully-featured darts board instead. Saves going down the Working Men's Club.

PUBLISHER Virgin Interactive • 020 7368 2255



ACTUA SOCCER 3

PCZ #72 • 72%

★ If you can't get on with *FIFA*, then *Actua* is the second port of call for footy fans. It plays a tastier game and there's a good range of options and a huge number of teams to play against, which goes a long way to helping maintain its sheit life.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



MILLENNIUM GAMES

PCZ #93 • 65%

NEWENTRY Everyone remembers the good days of Daley Thompson's joystick-wagging *Decathlon*. Sergai Bubka might not have the same pedigree, but this athletics simulation is good fun nonetheless.

PUBLISHER Midas • 01782 633500

SPACE COMBAT

X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #82 • 87%

★ The spirit of *Elite* lives on in this massive trading epic from Germany, in which you must buy and fight your way back home to Earth. The combat side of the gameplay may not be the best on offer, but with goods to trade and races to discover, it rewards patience with variety and months of play. This title is deeply hypnotic and beautiful, rather than tense and frenetic.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656



TERMINUS

NEWENTRY

Who says the days of independent bedroom programming are over? *Terminus* proves you can make a great game on your own if you have the talent and the passion. It just edges out *FreeSpace 2*.

PUBLISHER Vicarious Visions • www.vvisions.com

PCZ #93 • 86%



FREESPACE 2

PCZ #84 • 85%

★ Completely different from *X*, *FreeSpace 2* offers fast-paced dogfighting action all the way. It boasts a superb interface, epic story and amazing graphics, but it's a bit short-lived if you don't play online.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 020 7551 4222



X-WING: ALLIANCE

PCZ #77 • 81%

★ At last! Fly the Millennium Falcon in the final episode of the long-running *X-Wing* series. Certainly the best-looking *X-Wing* game to date, *Alliance* is slow at first, but boy does it pick up later on.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



STARLANCER

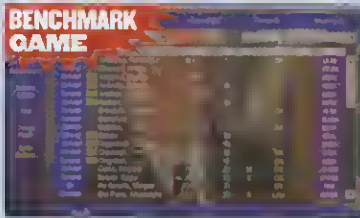
PCZ #91 • 80%

★ While *Starlancer* doesn't do anything startlingly new, it is a highly polished affair with compulsive gameplay and gorgeous visuals. A must for space sim fans.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

MANAGEMENT

CM 99/2000

BENCHMARK
GAME

PCZ #84 • 92%

★ More than a game... it's a way of life. So say fans of the best football management game in existence. If you dare to play it you can kiss your social life goodbye and expect to spend hours each and every day poring over unknown players in a bid to discover the next Ronaldo. The word 'benchmark' doesn't really describe how much better than the competition this game is.

PUBLISHER Eidos • 020 8636 3000



THE SIMS

PCZ #87 • 85%

★ This game offers a staggering amount of possibilities. Essentially, you create your own person, or family, and guide them through the ups and downs of life - it's the definitive docu-soap and makes for compelling gameplay.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



CAESAR III

PCZ #70 • 84%

★ Starting from scratch you've got to build a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious life for your citizens. So what? So it's utterly absorbing and probably the most addictive god sim in existence.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



SIMCITY 3000

PCZ #74 • 83%

★ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and newbies alike.

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442



ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

PCZ #75 • 82%

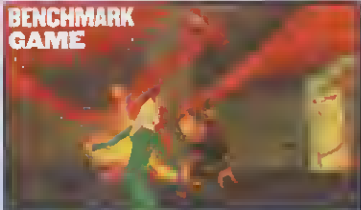
★ Pack out your own theme park with the most fiendish rides your imagination can conjure up. From rickety wooden dippers, to *Nemesis*-style, white-knuckle gurners, *RT* is hugely addictive.

PUBLISHER Hasbro • 020 8569 1234

ONLINE ONLY

EVERQUEST: THE RUINS OF KUNARK

BENCHMARK GAME



PCZ #92 • 90%

★ The combat-oriented online RPG of choice just got a whole lot better with this expansion pack. Chris Anderson has spent months casting spells with hundreds of other people and never stops talking about it, so there must be something special going on. *Ruins Of Kunark* doesn't really offer any radical changes, but in this case bigger really is better.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 020 8944 9000

ALLEGIANCE

PCZ #91 • 82%

★ The first true online only space combat sim, *Allegiance* is a complex yet rewarding beast. Now you can fly around with hundreds of others, coordinating strategies and establishing chains of command.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

ASHERON'S CALL

PCZ #88 • 76%

★ The graphics and freedom to do almost anything make this title a commendable addition to the genre. However, it's a crying shame you can't kill other humans as most of the ones you meet deserve a good kicking.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002 000

ULTIMA ONLINE: RENAISSANCE

PCZ #92 • 75%

★ It's been at the top for a while, but now the sequel is on the way the original looks dated. *Renaissance* isn't enough of an improvement for it to compete with *EverQuest* – online RPGs are moving on.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

ACES HIGH

PCZ #92 • 70%

★ More online airborne thrills with World War II planes. Aimed firmly at anoraky flight sim fanatics, it features some of the most accurate flight and physics modelling of any game of its kind.

PUBLISHER HiTech Creations • www.hitechcreations.com

3D ACTION/STRATEGY

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

BENCHMARK GAME



BUDGET

PCZ #79 • 90%

★ You don't get a second chance in a real war, and *Hidden & Dangerous* is the game that comes closest to putting you in the middle of hell on earth. From the first mission it grabs you by the balls and doesn't let up until you're dead, with a bullet in the head. As a strategic shoot 'em up, games don't get any harder, or more compelling and atmospheric.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

SWAT 3

PCZ #85 • 87%

★ Artificial intelligence doesn't get any better than this. Add some truly spectacular graphics, an ingenious command interface and edge-of-your-seat gameplay, and you've got a top title.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

ROGUE SPEAR

PCZ #84 • 84%

★ We loved *Rainbow Six* and although this follow-up can't match *Hidden & Dangerous* for intensity, it's a superb romp through the world of terrorism. Pick your team, kit them out and plan your missions carefully.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

BATTLEZONE 2

PCZ #84 • 84%

★ Stunning graphics and a winning blend of strategy and first-person action in this sequel to the highly acclaimed *Battlezone*. The fight for world domination has never looked so good.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

SPEC OPS 2

PCZ #84 • 80%

★ Challenging *Hidden & Dangerous* for the top spot, *Spec Ops 2* puts you in charge of a four-man green beret squad intent on staying alive and shooting the enemy in the head. Incredibly realistic, with top-notch sound.

PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900

PCZONE ALL-TIME CLASSICS



DOOM

★ This is the game that needs no introduction. Without *Doom* we wouldn't have had *Quake*, *Unreal Tournament* or (gulp) *Half-Life*. Every time you play a first-person shooter you should take five minutes to pay homage to the game that changed the world as we know it. *Doom*, we thank you.



ULTIMA VII

★ Still the best of all the *Ultima* games, and probably the finest RPG ever seen on a PC. The graphics might be old-hat, but the gameplay certainly isn't. *Ultima VII* blends exploration and character interaction, and it's the last title in the *Ultima* series to give complete party control.



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD

★ We reviewed this game back in the first issue of *PC ZONE*. It was a landmark RPG then and it's still a landmark RPG now, although the graphics obviously look a bit dated. Do we think it's the best RPG ever? Almost, but not quite. Cast your eyes up the mag a couple of inches for the answer to that question.



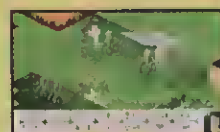
DUNE II

★ If you know your strategy, you'll know that *Dune II* is the game that's done more than any of its rivals to define the genre as we know it today. The 2000 update was disappointing, but only because it didn't add anything new. The fact that it still plays better than many new titles is testament to its staying power.



SENSIBLE WORLD OF SOCCER

★ EA's *FIFA* series might look the part, but we're convinced that *Sensible Soccer* was and is the ultimate example of gameplay over presentation. With its famous top-down view, *Sensible* offers fast frantic action that does more to replicate the real-life game than any of its predecessors.



UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN

★ This game came out of nowhere and took the world by storm. Compelling strategy, tense turn-based battles and a myriad of research options made this the most addictive game ever upon its arrival. Subsequent sequels were just as addictive, but this is the game that originally captured our hearts.



MAGIC CARPET

★ Drawing gasps of amazement from everyone who saw it, Bullfrog's *Magic Carpet* was one of the most original and inventive games to be released in the early days of 3D. So original, in fact, that it never got the recognition it deserved. We still think the blend of action and strategy was spot-on.



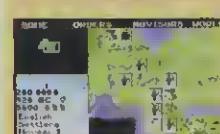
WING COMMANDER

★ The original space combat game spawned the first big-budget PC series. In fact, the *Wing Commander* series was so hugely successful that they went and made a film. Inevitably this was absolute rubbish and the public stayed away in their millions. Will these people ever learn?



TOMB RAIDER

★ She might be getting a bit rusty round the gills, but when Lara first bounced onto the small screen we fell in love with her instantly. 3D action adventure games haven't been the same since and at the time nothing could touch it. Do you remember your first encounter with the T-Rex?



CIVILIZATION

★ The original and some say the best turn-based strategy game. When *Civilization* first appeared, it was hailed correctly as the first game that changed and evolved depending on how you played it. Recent versions have presented more of the same, but in this case that is definitely no bad thing.

ON THE CD

Two CDs packed full of exclusives and top-notch demos? You'd better believe it

★ WORDS Martin Korda DISKS John Hudson

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CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

CO-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708 250250 any weekday between 9.30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm, or email pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk. Please do NOT phone the PC ZONE office. Thanks.

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling the helpline, please take note of the following points:

- ★ If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call.
- ★ If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- ★ Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call so you can jot down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- ★ You need at least a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- ★ Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95/98 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 233 with 64Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- ★ Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are 3D accelerator only.



DEMOS

VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE – REDEMPTION

Activision

2 CD
SPECIAL

EXCLUSIVE



An English football hooligan gets kitted up.

The first of this month's exclusive demos attained one of our rare Classic awards. Your party of four intrepid blood suckers find themselves trapped in a castle, and it's your goal to get them out safely. After a brief introduction which shows off the stunning graphics engine, it's time to find a way out. Every member of your party has their own strengths and weaknesses and it's important that you take them into account when fighting the groups of guards scattered around the place. If you don't, they'll all get slaughtered faster than pigs in a sausage factory.

The demo is taken from the Vienna section of the full game, in which you're looking for the kidnapped nun Aneska. Make sure you keep your characters well stocked with blood, as the Mana it provides is essential for casting spells. Once you've sampled the game's fantastic graphics, immersive storyline and exciting combat, we're sure you'll be as impressed with it as we were.

Controls: Mouse

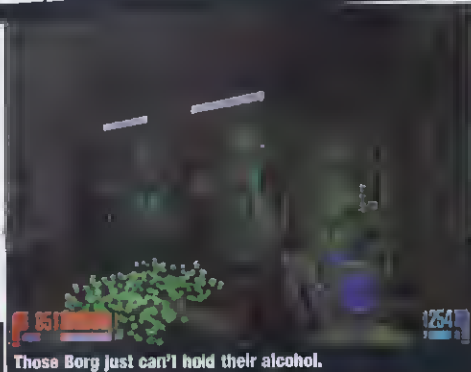


"Help, my shoulder's on fire."

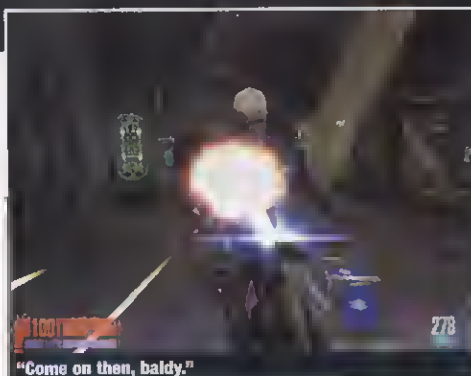


"On your knees, maggots."

EXCLUSIVE



Those Borg just can't hold their alcohol.



"Come on then, baldy."



"I'd see an optician about that if I were you mate."



"Stand still a second, you've got something in your eye."

STAR TREK: VOYAGER ELITE FORCE

Activision

Exclusive number two is one of the finest FPSs of all time, *Star Trek: Voyager*. Moving away from the deathmatch orientation that the genre has been taking of late, *STV* models itself more on the single-player gameplay of *Half-Life*. And as we all know only too well, that's no bad thing.

This demo throws you into the most sell-your-pants-scary scenario that any *Star Trek* fan could imagine. Isolated in a Borg cube, with nothing

other than a couple of basic weapons at your disposal, you must fight your way through the ambling cyborgs, rescue your team mate from assimilation and retrieve the only weapon the enemy cannot adapt to, Seven of Nine's I-MOD gun. In a very short space of time, you'll find that your normal weapons become useless, as the Borg quickly adapt to them. When this happens, it's time to run away... very quickly. Because there's only

one I-MOD gun, when you do finally liberate your team mate, he proves to be about as useful to you as a five-year-old with a water pistol, so once again it's up to you to navigate him to safety. With puzzles to solve and plenty of enemies to shoot, this demo will give you an excellent insight into just how good the full game is. Check our review of the full game on page 58.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard



EXCLUSIVE

Looks like you've got yourself a bit of an insect problem there.

Nothing a bit of superglue won't fix.

One shot and I blue him away. Get it, blue? Oh never mind.

KISS: PSYCHO CIRCUS

Take 2 Interactive

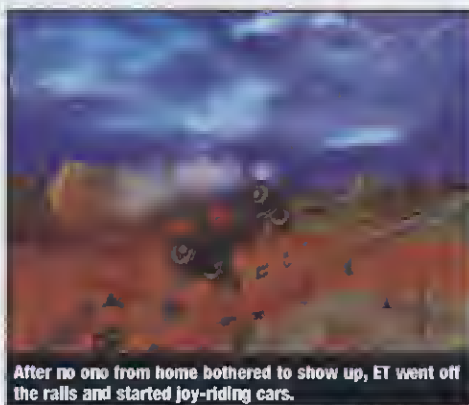
It's somewhat ironic that a band called Kiss are the stars of a game all about violence and destruction, in which you have to shoot evil, vile-looking creatures. Still, that's not to say that our third exclusive isn't a top-quality game. What's more, this is a huge demo, allowing you to try out missions for each of the four characters, on one of five difficulty settings. They all have their own selection of weapons, and right from the offset you'll have to be alert, as wave after wave of enemy nasties try to rearrange your internal organs. There are also a fair amount

of basic puzzles for you to solve, daring jumps to perform and items to pick up. Death will be a concept you become extremely familiar with very quickly, particularly at the start of each level. Little allowance has been made for FPS newbies here. Once you get to grips with the controls and the movements of your enemies, you'll find that the whole experience is actually a hugely rewarding one. In short, it's the game *Daikatana* could have been.

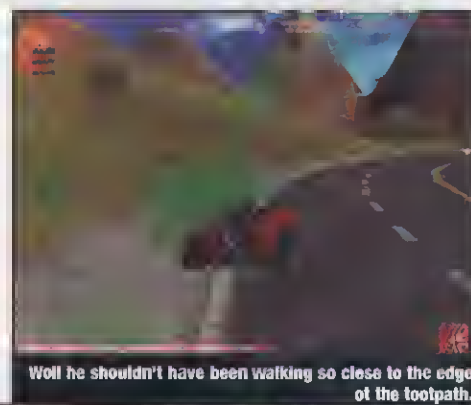
Controls: Mouse and keyboard



Sports car for sale. Recently resprayed, low mileage, one careful owner.



After no one from home bothered to show up, ET went off the rails and started joy-riding cars.



Well he shouldn't have been walking so close to the edge of the footpath.

CARMAGEDDON TDR 2000

Sci

Even though *Carmageddon* has gone all politically correct on us (you can't run over real people now, only zombies), it's still plenty of fun to play. The race provided on the CD is no ordinary first-past-the-post contest either, as it's not only a case of outrunning the rest of the field, but outscoring them too. This can be done in a number of ways. Firstly, you can accumulate points by running over the ambling undead, watching as their frail bodies disintegrate on impact, spraying green blood all over your paint work (some people are so selfish). Secondly, you can up your score by demolishing any car that gets in your way. Finally, there is a large stunt arena, in which successfully executed stunts will rack up your points total. The car is easy to handle and the action manic and varied, making the game very easy to get to grips with, and all the more fun.

Controls: Keyboard

Try explaining this one to your insurance company.

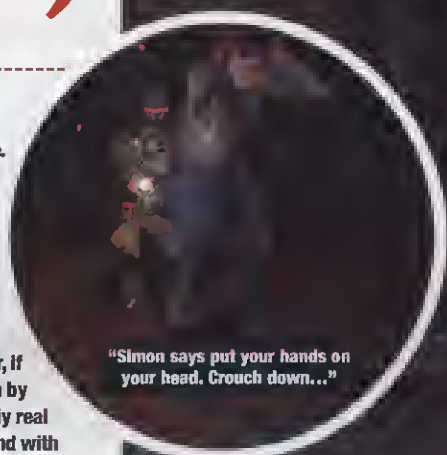


DEUS EX (MISSION 2)

Eidos

After last month's taster of one of the greatest titles in computer gaming history, we've managed to get our hands on another (exclusive) mission from the full game. All you have to do to be able to play, is install it into the same directory as last month's demo. There is a catch, however. You're going to have to complete the first mission before you can have a crack at this new one. Still, it's not exactly a hardship, what with the gameplay allowing objectives to be reached in a variety of different ways. If you're into violence and shooting, then you can kill your way through the mission, however, if you prefer to covertly sneak around and win the mission by outsmarting the enemy, then this is possible too. The only real limits to *Deus Ex* are the ones you impose on yourself, and with gameplay as versatile as this, the new mission should keep you occupied for quite some time to come.

Controls: Mouse and keyboard



"Simon says put your hands on your head. Crouch down..."

"...I didn't say Simon says."

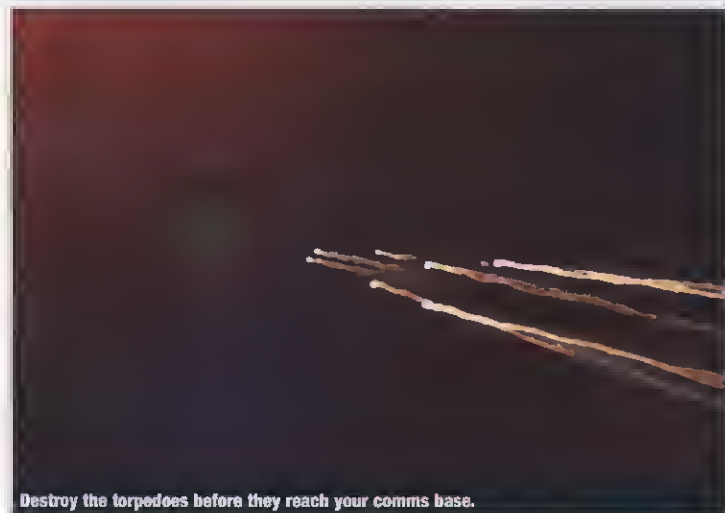
EXCLUSIVE



The demo sets the scene for the start of the full game.



The Coalition launch a surprise attack on Alliance forces.



Destroy the torpedoes before they reach your comms base.

STARLANCER

Microsoft

Here's a nice idea, a demo which sets the scene for the full game, rather than being an extract from it. It's quite clear that developers Digital Anvil have put plenty of thought and effort into making this one. A space shooter from the people who brought you the *Wing Commander* games, *StarLancer* revolves around a future conflict between the Coalition (ie the Russians) and the Alliance (a thinly veiled version of NATO). The demo is set just before the start of the full game. With the two warring factions about to sign a peace treaty, you and your wing are sent out for a standard patrol, only to uncover a Coalition surprise attack. Thrown into an unexpected combat situation, you must dispose of the enemy fighters while protecting your base from waves of torpedoes. Those of you who like your space combat fast and furious will love this.

Controls: Joystick and/or keyboard





This game contains scenes of explicit violence and gore.

Excellent.

DINO CRISIS

Virgin Interactive

Sent to investigate the mysterious events at a secret research facility, you and your two elite forces comrades soon discover exactly why all the scientists and guards have disappeared. You play the role of the female character Regina, and you must lead her round the base, discovering clues that will uncover the truth of what happened. It soon becomes apparent that something or some things very large, and very powerful were behind the death and wreckage, and it's only a matter of time until you come face to face with some of the culprits. Although graphically poor, *Dino Crisis* offers plenty of opportunities to jump out of your seat, fire randomly at shadows in wild panic, and get ripped to shreds by unseen lurking dinosaurs.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad



INTERNATIONAL CRICKET CAPTAIN 2000

Empire

Something quite rare happened recently. England actually won a cricket match. If this sudden surge in form has inspired you to play cricket again, then *ICC* could be the game for you. The demo allows you to

sample several of the full game's options, including county and international matches. It's your goal to eventually be appointed captain, and lead your country (only England are available here, so good luck) to

cricket world domination. You choose who bowls and how they bowl, where to place your fielders and other match tactics. Then sit back and watch the highlights.

Controls: Mouse

INFESTATION

Ubi Soft

Buckle up and get ready for some high-speed action in this demo of Ubi Soft's futuristic driving game. The tutorial will fill you in on the basics, after which it's time to test out your newly acquired skills on the mission provided. Just remember to collect the tokens scattered around the circuit, otherwise you won't be able to upgrade your car.

Controls: Keys/gamepad



OTHER DEMOS

BANG! GUNSHIP ELITE

Fantastic space combat with a variety of weapons.

HUNT FOR THE RED BARON

Take to the bloodied skies of World War I, in this arcade fighter-combat game.

STAR TREK: CONQUEST ONLINE

Online turn-based strategy for dominant Trekkies who want to conquer their mates.

SUPERCHIX '76

Check out the babes in this racing game, but try to keep your eyes on the road.

MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2001

Swing that bat and try to actually hit the ball, in this tab baseball game from Microsoft.

3D ULTRA PINBALL: THRILLRIDE

Colourful pinball action from Sierra, on an amusement park table.

SAMMY SOSA HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 2001

Hit your way to adulation with some home runs. Or perhaps not.

SAMMY SOSA SOFTBALL SLAM

Baseball for those of you who don't like it hard.

GLSETUP

Try updating your OpenGL drivers if you're having problems with your old ones.

DIRECTX 7.0A FOR WIN9X

Essential drivers for most Win9x gaming.

ONLINE

With these helpful programs, using the Internet will be a whole lot simpler

Gamespy 30 v2.19
Neotrace 2.12a
PingTool 2.6a
Winsock 2
GUN Manager 2.0d
FTP Explorer 1.0010
GetRight 4.2b
MIRC 5.71
Mplayer
Kali 2.0
ICQ2000a build 3140
Roger Wilco Mk1.1a
Batum Online
Go!Zilla Free 3.5
ClaraNET

PATCHES

The latest updates for some of your favourite games

Dungeon Keeper 2 v1.30 to v1.70
NASCAR Racing 3 Craftsman Truck
Series Expansion Pack v1.2.1.7
F1 2000 v1.09
Icewind Dale Beta Patch

UTILITIES

To make your hard disk more user friendly, all you have to do is install this little lot

WinZip 8.0
EzDesk 1.8
Power Toys
TreeSize Professional v2.31
Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.05
HyperSnap-0X Pro 3.61
(New version)
SciTech Display Doctor v6.53
Windows Media Player

EDITORIAL

Watch some rolling demos, gets some tips, update *Champ Manager* and if you're still bored, make your own *Half-Life* levels. Happy now?

Hot Shots - Empire Earth
Hot Shots - Halo
Hot Shots - Oni
Tips and Solutions
Championship Manager 99/00
Update
WorldCraft 3.3

EXTENDED PLAY

This month we bring you an update for *Strike Force*, and 101 maps for *Team Fortress Classic*, *Action Half-Life* and *Counter-Strike*. Check out the next two pages where Mark Hill gives you a run down on all of the best *CS* levels on this month's discs.

EXTENDED PLAY

We've got a load of maps for *TFC*, *Action Half-Life* and *Counter-Strike* this month. To help you select the best ones for the most popular mod ever created, we give you a run-down of the top *CS* levels

★ COUNTER-TERRORIST Mark Hill

TRY IT YOURSELF



On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 144.

“Solano is a great-looking level where the designers have actually taken time working on the textures. Not only that, the structure is innovative”

COUNTER-STRIKE

★ We once had a great idea for a *Counter-Strike* map. It was going to take place in the *PC ZONE* building, and the objective would be to place a bomb in the basement where we live.

You'd hide behind piles of rubble made of old games, useless steering wheels and magazines. There'd be dark rooms where the fluorescent lights weren't working properly and the men's toilets would be flooded. You'd be able to go up to the advertising floor and see the pristine newness of all the office furniture and be frightened to death by the gurgle of the water dispenser. But now we're moving offices and we've all been too busy playing proper maps anyway. Here are some of them.

★ RAGE

Filename: *cs_rage.zip*

Size: 962Kb

Rating: ★★★★★

A hostage level with a full frontal assault providing a satisfying

shootout (although not quite up to the standards of the garage in *Siege*). *Rage* is balanced quite heavily towards the terrorists. Snipers at the windows of the building can take the whole CT team down before they know what's happening.

Smoke grenades are highly recommended if you go the direct route. Another entry can be found at the back of the building. The map works a lot better than others we could care to mention and the layout invites some interesting tactics. Still, for some godforsaken reason, the whole thing doesn't quite gel together to become an indispensable addition to your level rotation. Best played with around eight people per team.

★ CITY

Filename: *cs_city1.zip*

Size: 486Kb

Rating: ★★★★★

This is a wide open map, ideal for sniper-heads. The worst thing you can do, whether you're a terrorist guarding the hostages or a CT trying to rescue them, is run into the open. Terrorists will



Smashing up skylights is more fun than we'd anticipated.

NET ADDRESSES

BOOKMARKS

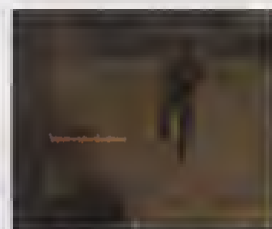
COUNTER-STRIKE HOMEPAGE www.counter-strike.net

ACTION HALF-LIFE HOMEPAGE ahl.telefagged.com

TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC HOMEPAGE sierrastudios.com/games/tf1.5

inevitably take sniping positions from the tall buildings while CTs will need to run from behind one crate to another or take the underground route. To make up for the openness, the map is quite dark, so you won't necessarily see the enemy straight away. Of course, it also means that if you are playing it in a brightly-lit office like we are, you can't see a sodding thing. Best played with between five and ten people on each team.

tunnels and can become claustrophobic after a while. Alternate it with a map like *City* for a perfect combination. You will need a minimum of three players on each side and no more than eight.



★ “Put that bomb down.” Shoot him in the head more like.

★ BREACH

Filename: *cs_breach.zip*

Size: 324Kb

Rating: ★★★★★

This is a curious level that goes for the vertical rather than horizontal approach. The hostages are kept halfway up a small but tall building; the terrorists start at the top and the CTs at the bottom. Most of the time, however, you'll just forget about the stupid scientists (I mean, how come these brilliant minds behave like lobotomised cows on roller skates) and turn it into a shooting match through the skylights on the roof. It's also pretty dark up there, so there are plenty of opportunities for sneaking up on unsuspecting



★ Watch out for snipers from that building. And hide for Chrissakes!

★ SOLANO

Filename: *de_solano_bsp.zip*

Size: 419Kb

Rating: ★★★★★

It may look like a simplistic ‘bomb the target’ map to start with, but *Solano* pays off after a few rounds of playing it properly. It's a great-looking level where the designers have actually taken time working on the textures. Not only that, the structure is innovative and inviting. The down side is that it largely takes place in enclosed



Take out the predictable terrorist by shooting for the hole in the wall first.

victims. We'd recommend four on each team maximum.

★ RUSH

Filename: *cs_rush.zip*

Size: 554Kb

Rating: ★★☆☆

The great thing about Rush is that it offers two types of games in one. The CTs have got to rescue the hostages while preventing the terrorists from bombing. The problem arises if the teams are made up of a bunch of camping bores, who set up tent and sing around campfires waiting for the other team to come rather than rushing. To avoid confusion the level is pretty straightforward, and although the small log house where the bomb has to be planted looks good enough, it's completely at odds with the cement that makes up the terrorist base and the midway building. Five per team recommended.



Ⓜ That's the house the dirty stinking terrorist is going to plant the bomb in.

★ FARM

Filename: *cs_farm.bsp.zip*

Size: 1.02Mb

Rating: ★★★★★

Probably the best map on offer, Farm is let down by a stupid bug that doesn't let you get out of the water in the subterranean tunnel (if there is a way, we haven't found it). The brilliant design

reminds us of one of the levels in *Rainbow Six*, with a real night-time in a Mexican mansion feel to it. There's a great-looking swimming pool, stables, a small garage and hot country-style white walls. The interior could have done with more furniture and decoration, but you can't have everything. We'd say eight people maximum, although a lot of fun can be had with just a couple on each side.

★ EMBASSY

Filename: *cs_embassy.zip*

Size: 323kb

Rating: ★★☆☆

Very similar to the older (but much better) Estate, Embassy has the CT starting behind a wall in the courtyard in front of an American consulate. The textures are extremely raw and, apart from a few flags and eagle logos, there's very little to look at. The terrorists have by far the easier job. Other maps may be lopsided, but this one's ridiculous. The problem is that half of the CTs start somewhere that takes them into the direct line of fire of the terrorists. Still, if you fancy a challenge...

★ SMUGGLE

Filename: *cs_smuggle.zip*

Size: 847Kb

Rating: ★★☆☆

This map is absolutely huge and involves the usual rescuing of the hostages (this time locked up in sadistic-looking cells with 'electronically controlled doors'). There may not be much colour or change of scenery, but the sheer scale and number of levels that combat takes place on make it worthwhile. There are absolutely shed-loads of scientists to rescue (some of them in rooms knee-deep with water), so you'll need a pretty big team to make a



Tiny map, but at least the crates explode.

successful run. Otherwise, you'll just descend into the old 'wipe out the opposition' routine. Not that there's anything wrong with that, of course. Six to 12 players per team.



Ⓜ Sometimes it's kinder to just shoot the scientists. Poor sods.

★ HONDELUL

Filename: *cs_hondelul.zip*

Size: 176Kb

Rating: ★★☆☆

This strangely named map is tiny, making it ideal for one-on-ones. It doesn't score highly on looks, but it can be fun for some straight shooting. The biggest downer though, is that because it's so small, the winning team can always rush the losing side while they're still buying weapons, making for some very frustrating rounds. One thing we



Hack the eagle. Stab the White House picture. Go home.

will say for it is that it's got the only dynamite crates in any CS level that actually explode when you shoot them. Max of three players per team recommended.

NEW LAYOUT

As you may have noticed, we've tweaked the layout of Extended Play very slightly. From this point on, we'll be including the names and sizes of every file we list, meaning it we're unable to include them on the disc you can go and find them yourself online. Places to search for games, game patches and all related files include:

www.fileplanet.com

Used by countless gaming sites across the globe, FilePlanet is a wonderful way to get software. Not only does it pigeon-hole every title into Yahoo-like categories, it keeps track of major FTP mirrors and other file repositories where you can get copies of the file, should the main download area fail.

www.fileleech.com

Similar in both function and appearance to FilePlanet, FileLeech is another huge archive aimed solely at gamers. The only real downside is the fact that it's all white text on dark backgrounds, making it hard on the eyes when it's late and your eyes are stinging and you want to go to bed.

www.gamespyder.com

The Yahoo! for gamers, GameSpyder provides a very strict and useful categorised approach to gaming. Every genre and sub-genre is catered for, as are some of the lesser-known games and utilities. Growing every day and definitely worth a bookmark.

ftpsearch.lycos.com

Once you know the name of the title you are after, Lycos's FTP Search is invaluable. It keeps records on most of the world's most popular FTP archives and mirrors, and lists every file on their hard drives. This means it's very easy to get straight to the toys you want – and in the fastest locations, too.

We will rate everything to give you a good idea of what's hot (and what's not), and we'll also give two descriptions – a short one for the attention deficit disorder sufferers among you, and another giving a much more detailed, comprehensive and in-depth view.



Nowt like playing a map with a pool when the air conditioning is down.

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gameplay

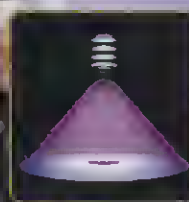
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Icewind Dale is a single, or multiplayer, role-playing game set in Wizard of the Coast's granddaddy of all fantasy game worlds, the Forgotten Realms. Icewind Dale concentrates on classic dungeon adventuring rather than an overland, exploring quest based game. The focus in Icewind Dale is on the party rather than a sole hero and the gameplay is geared specifically for this. Icewind Dale is being developed and published by Black Isle Studios, a division of Interplay and uses AD&D Second Edition rules, the same system used in Baldur's Gate.

Icewind Dale is set contextually within the Icewind Dale trilogy of books, written by Robert Salvatore, and published by Wizards of the Coast. Your party starts in Easthaven, one of the Ten Towns of Icewind Dale. From there, the party embarks on an expedition into the Spine of the World Mountains where you will visit ten new, major, areas as well as several smaller locations to explore. There are well over fifty new dungeon levels for you to explore.

Interactive TV: Open...., Telewest and NTL
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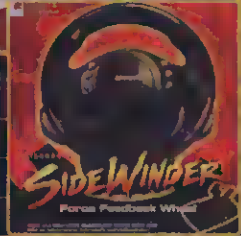
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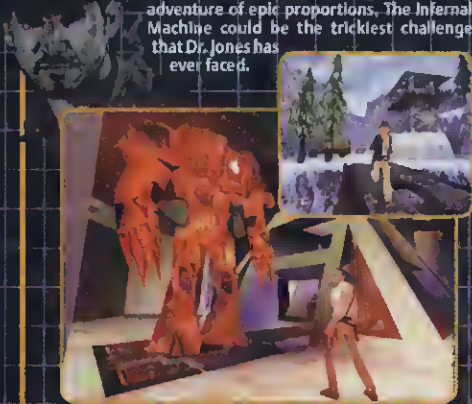
Grand Prix 3 from the legendary Geoff Crammond is easily the most anticipated driving game of all time. His previous two GP titles were genre defining and GP2 remains the best F1 game available despite its advancing years. That's all about to change however, as GP3 prepares to put you in the cockpit of the most advanced Formula 1 simulation ever. Included are all the teams, drivers and circuits from the 1999 season, but for the ultimate realism you'll also need a good wheel. They don't come much better than Microsoft's Sidewinder with Force Feedback, and this is your chance to get 'em both, plus you'll save yourself some money into the bargain. Like Schumacher and Ferrari, it's a perfect combination!



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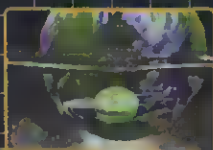


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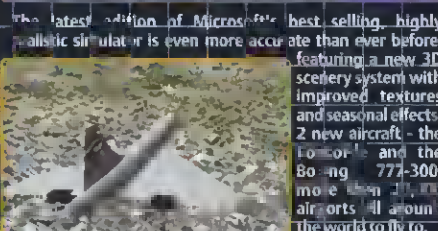
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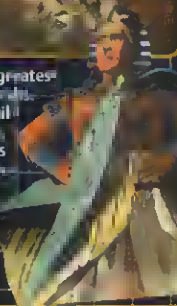


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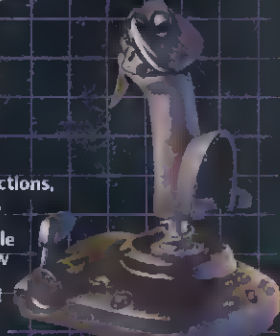


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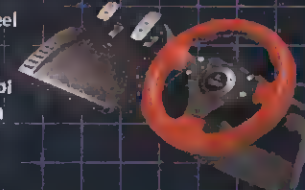
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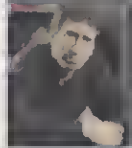
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THE LIONHEAD DIARIES



After wowing punters at E3, Lionhead is hoping for a similar response from EA as it completes *Black & White's* alpha version. And there's also an oriental obstacle to be dealt with

★ AS OBSERVED BY Steve Jackson

THE MAKINGS OF A WORLD BETA

The end is finally in sight! After almost three years of development work, *Black & White* is nearing completion. For the last month, the office has been operating 24 hours a day as the *Black & White* team work frantically to achieve alpha.

I should explain. As development of a game draws to a conclusion, there are three critical stages it must pass through: alpha, beta and final. The definition of each stage can vary from publisher to publisher. But generally speaking, at alpha the game is pretty much code-complete. No new game features will be built in, and it is possible to play at least one level from start to finish. All the frilly bits will still need to be incorporated, like the intro/ending sequences, titles, speech, translations and so on. And there will undoubtedly be plenty of bugs which need sorting out. The alpha version is then submitted to the publisher for approval. Usually there is a significant payment due on acceptance (not just delivery) of the alpha version, so publishers will scrutinise this version particularly carefully. This may also be the publisher's first experience of the actual gameplay itself.

Pre-alpha versions do not need to be playable; they merely serve to demonstrate a game's key features. When the publisher accepts an alpha version, it will usually send back a list of amendments and bugs which need fixing. The beta version of the game needs to incorporate all these changes, plus the 'extras' missing from the alpha. A beta version should, therefore, be virtually complete. The publisher will put the beta version through its paces, checking for bugs. Teams of play-testers will be let loose on the beta version, trying to 'break' it. As each bug is discovered, it is identified and passed back to the developer for fixing.

When a version of the game exists that is stable and crash-free, it is finally considered complete. The code is assembled on a CD - known as the Gold Master - and sent off for duplication. Reaching alpha means a publisher can expect the final version within a reasonable time - perhaps six months, maximum. The implications are huge: not least that it kick-starts the publisher's marketing machine into action. As a game enters its final stages, all sorts of new problems present themselves. Last month 'Shin' Kanaoya of EA Square arrived from Tokyo to discuss the Japanese version of *B&W*. Whereas translating between European languages is a routine affair, oriental versions pose particular problems because of the way character-based languages work.

All words in English can be made up from 26 letters. This means each letter can be comfortably identified in a single byte of information, since a byte allows 256 variations. However, written Japanese has three alphabets: kanji, katakana and hiragana. Katakana and hiragana are phonetic alphabets with 52 characters. But kanji depicts nouns and adjectives, giving each an individual symbol. There are around 20,000 kanji characters alone, so

identifying a character in a single byte is impossible. Two bytes - allowing 65,000 variations - are required. If double-byte characters haven't been provided for early on in the development of the game, it may subsequently prove impossible to display Japanese characters on the screen.

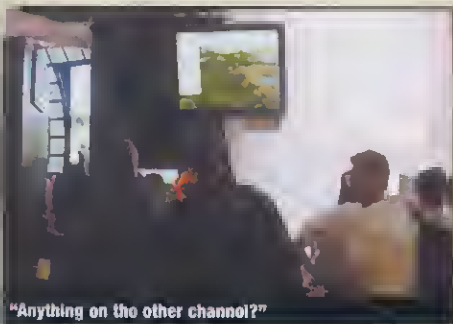
There are other implications too, like the fonts themselves. It is relatively easy for an artist to design a European-style font specifically for *B&W*. He simply draws out the basic 26 English alphabet letters, plus a few European variations (such as vowels incorporating an umlaut in German or accents in French) and throws in a few universal symbols like brackets and question marks. To do the same for Japanese would require the creation of over 20,000 individual characters. As Windows-based PC games are not a huge market in Japan, this would be highly impractical for a small studio like Lionhead. In the end we will probably have to use the standard Japanese fonts built into Windows. Even then, caching 20,000 characters will pose extra problems in RAM management.

As if there weren't enough to do, E3 (the industry's largest trade show) came up in the middle of May. Previously, *B&W* had only been shown to invited journalists behind closed doors. This year, our publisher, EA, provided a section of its stand to demonstrate *B&W* to the visiting public.

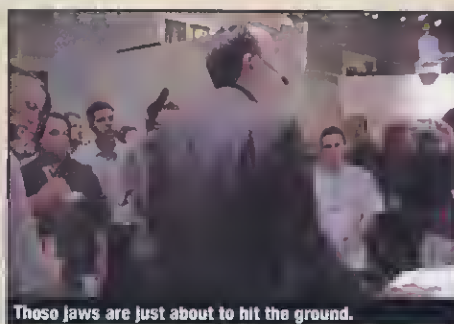
The crowds were huge, particularly at Peter's daily demos each afternoon. We were overwhelmed by the response. And doubly so in the aftermath of E3 when press reports began to come in. *B&W* won four 'official' awards from the E3 panel of experts - Best Of Show, Best Original Game, Best PC Game and Best Strategy Game - as well as several other awards from independent magazines and Websites. The game also garnered some immensely flattering reviews which included: "...*Black & White* is the perfect game to symbolise the new age of gaming. Hallelujah" and "*Black & White* makes *Diablo II* look like my homemade Q-basic version of *Pong*" (a tad unfair - everyone at Lionhead, including me, has been eagerly awaiting *Diablo II*).

Praise like this is scary. It gives us a lot to live up to. Our immediate challenge is to similarly impress EA when they receive the alpha version of *B&W*. It's now 9pm and I should get back to work on the game. If only there were more hours in the day... **PCZ**

★ As well as being a director of developer Lionhead, Steve Jackson is co-founder of Games Workshop, author of *Fighting Fantasy* Gamebooks, and a columnist for *The Daily Telegraph*.
★ The next instalment follows in our November issue, on sale Thursday September 21.



"Anything on the other channel?"



Those jaws are just about to hit the ground.



Working out a few Japanese problems.

TEAM TALK



Most sane people can't wait to get out of the office come six o'clock. Sadly, this isn't the case for the **PC ZONE** team – a strange new addiction has taken over their pitiful lives...

★ **DISHING THE DIRT:** Martin Korda

It seems that the official **PC ZONE** drink, the 'Wheato', is now a thing of the past. Little did we know at the time, but Richie's stag night (well over a month ago now), was actually to be the swan song for the cloudy brew. The days of Chris tumbling theatrically off

favourite post-work past time, *EverQuest*.

Next to go is the man who could shoot a hair off a person's head at 500 yards, even after being poked in the eye with a particularly nasty looking fork (we should know we've tried it), Mark 'Leatherface' Hill. Mark is so good at FPSs that it's a relief

office challenging the cleaning ladies to a fight, and threatening to kill Tim with a copy of *Test Drive 6*. In his defence though, the latter of the two tends to be quite a common occurrence.

After the departure of these two, Mac boys Phil 'Shit Kicker' Clark and Colin 'Ammaka' Mackleworth jump onto the two vacated PCs to get a bit of the action. With *Counter-Strike* veterans Richie 'Zapatero' Shoemaker and Dave 'Kid Unknown' Woods leading by example, these two boys from the art department have made great progress, often making it to the end of a game with less than four friendly kills between them. In one game, Phil's attempt to hand the bomb to a teammate finally

ended in tragedy, as he dropped everything other than the said object. The rest of us, feeling decidedly bored, voted unanimously that it would just be quicker to shoot him in the head. It was a mercy killing.

As with every drug, though, *Counter-Strike* can have serious repercussions on your health. After a particularly lengthy session, Dave was spotted hobbling home, bent over like Quasimodo with a slipped disc. When offered a Zimmer frame by a passing pensioner, he politely declined, claiming that a good night's rest would sort out his sudden back complaint. It took him a week to resurface.

Finally, there's me, Martin 'Nameless One' Korda, or Nameslees One as I once accidentally spelt it in my haste to get into the game. Every time we play, I'm subjected to barrages of criticism, for allegedly 'camping'. And I have to put up with the warblings of Richie and Chris as they sing "Here comes Nameslees to save the day" to the tune of *Mighty Mouse*. Now you try telling me *Counter-Strike* doesn't affect your sanity. [X]

“After a particularly lengthy session, Dave was spotted hobbling home, bent over like Quasimodo with a slipped disc. It took him a week to resurface”

chairs and Dave struggling to recall where he lived will be fondly remembered and sorely missed by all. However, as office smug git Tim MacDonald (who has been looking unusually sheepish since half the Arsenal squad defected to Barcelona) likes to say, when you lose one thing, you replace it with something else. And replaced it we have, with a new (legal) drug, one so addictive that it's surely only a matter of time till the government slap a tax on it. The drug in question is none other than *Counter-Strike*.

Daylight is no longer a concept that we're familiar with, as lunchtime and after-work sessions eat away at our lives. Some games have been known to go on until 9pm, as cries of "just one more map" echo hauntingly round the offices of Dennis Publishing.

Chris 'Unholy' Anderson is often the first to leave, muttering under his breath that his teammates are a bunch of chimps who fail to understand the concept of team work. We suspect though, that this is no more than a veiled excuse to allow him to go home, don his pointy hat and robe and indulge in some goblin-bashing in his other

when his name finally disappears from the top of the kill board come 6.30pm. However, the other day it all got a bit much for him, as he started wandering round the



The **PCZ** editorial staff make the complex tactical decision to blow Phil's brains out. Team work, eh? You can't beat it.

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